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Chess

The Whisky Immortal

Craig Pritchett reports back from Scotland's strongest ever tournament

ISSN 0964-6221

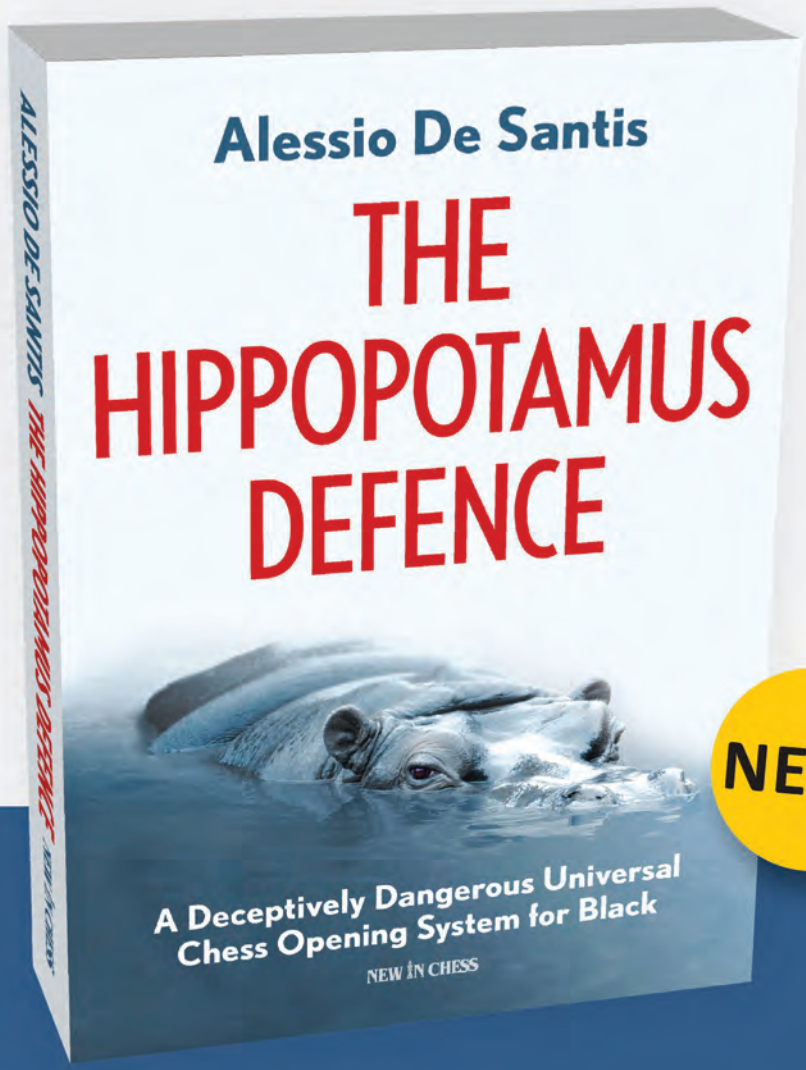
Guildford: The Inside Story - Roger Emerson on how the 4NCL was again conquered

An Elite Test - Matthew Sadler explains how he neutralised Richard Rapport as Black

Celebrating a Club Centenary - Phil Crocker explains how Chester marked 100 years

VISIT…

A seriously underestimated animal...



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Chess

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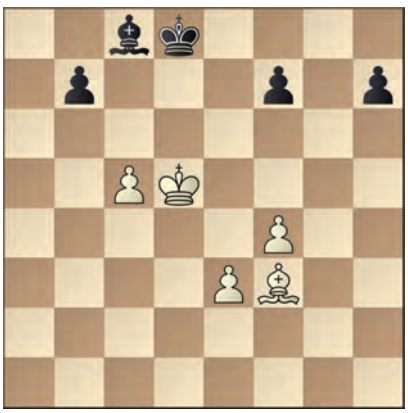
Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein **@TelegraphChess**

The D-Day 75th anniversary commemorations reminded me of another anniversary from World War II. When the magazine arrives with UK readers it will be 75 years since the death of Vera Menchik, the seven-time Women's World Champion who was killed by a V1 flying bomb together with her mother and sister. Born to a Bohemian father and English mother, Menchik ended up in Hastings in 1921 when her wealthy family were forced to flee after the Russian revolution. She became a member of Hastings Chess Club and was trained by Geza Maroczy.

Menchik's list of scalps is too long to mention, but included Max Euwe (twice!) and Mir Sultan Khan. In Euwe-Menchik, Hastings Premier 1930, Euwe held a clear edge all game after a standard minority attack in the QGD. By this point his advantage was not enough to win and he has just played **46 ♔c4-d5?**.



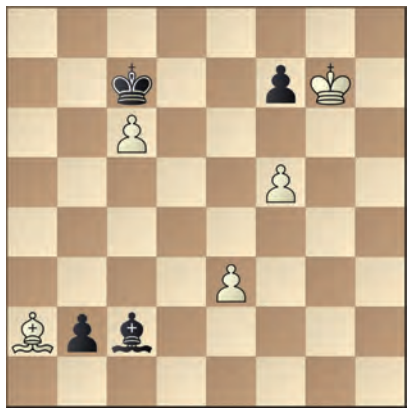
46...b6! 47 c6

47 cxb6?? ♗b7+ wins, but 47 e4 bxc5 48 ♔xc5 was a draw.

47...♔c7 48 ♔e5 ♗e6 49 f5 ♗b3 50 ♔f6 b5 51 ♔g7?

By now White needed to be precise and find 51 e4 ♔xc6 52 e5+ ♔c5 53 ♗h5 b4 54 e6 fxe6 55 fxe6 ♗xe6 56 ♔xe6 b3 57 ♗d1 b2 58 ♗c2 h5 59 ♔f5 to draw.

51...b4 52 ♔xh7 ♗c2 53 ♔g7 b3 54 ♗d5 b2 55 ♗a2



55...♔xc6 56 f6

Also hopeless are 56 ♔xf7 ♗b3+ and 56 e4 ♗xe4 57 ♔xf7 ♗d5+ 58 ♗xd5+ ♔xd5.

56...♔d6 57 e4 ♗xe4 58 ♔xf7 ♗d5+ 59 ♗xd5 b1♕ 60 ♔g7 ♕g1+ 61 ♔f8 ♔xd5 0-1

Menchik also defeated nearly all the leading players of the day in the UK: Sir Stuart Milner-Barry, William Winter, Harry Golombek, and Sir George Thomas. In the 1930s, ways of attacking the King's Indian had been better developed than ways of defending it.

V.Menchik-G.A.Thomas
London 1932
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 e5 7 ♘ge2 b6

Menchik herself improved three years later with 7...a6 8 ♕d2 ♗d7, but still lost to Capablanca at Moscow 1935.

8 ♕d2 ♘c6 9 d5 ♘e7 10 g4 ♘d7 11 ♖g1 a5 12 0-0-0 ♘c5 13 ♘g3 ♗d7 14 h4 a4 15 h5 ♕b8 16 ♗h6 ♕a7 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7

18 ♘f5+! ♘xf5 19 gxf5 a3 20 f6+! ♔h8 21 ♕h6 axb2+ 22 ♔b1 ♖g8 23 hxg6 fxg6 24 ♕xh7+! 1-0

Menchik was just too strong for every other female player in the world championship, winning it first in 1928 and defending it six times, switching from Russian allegiance to playing under the Czechoslovakian flag before at Buenos Aires in 1939 playing under the Union Jack. Her score in these contests was a mighty +74 =4 -1.

It is time for a Vera Menchik Memorial tournament.

Born to a Bohemian father and an English mother, Vera Menchik settled in Hastings after the Russian Revolution. She thrived in the chess-rich seaside town, becoming a world-class player.

Is the Future Armageddon?

I went to the Norway Chess tournament at Stavanger to gather opinions and see for myself the new format that demanded an Armageddon play-off after every drawn classical game. The players retained colours and White enjoyed ten minutes to Black's seven with the second player getting draw

For a second year, the organisers of Norway Chess wanted their players to relax in the kitchen. Alexander Grischuk proved a nimble commis chef, as watched by Magnus Carlsen.

odds. The play-offs usually took place around 20 minutes after the end of the classical game and were scheduled to work with the live television coverage on Norway's TV2.

My impression was that the less people were involved with chess, the more they liked the format, which is effectively the equivalent of a penalty shoot-out. The television people really liked it and it was an open secret that the ratings for the tournament were well up on previous years. Some of the players and their seconds privately criticised the set-up, but of course they all signed up for it.

John Saunders discusses the outcomes in detail inside. It appears that 10 vs 7 was perhaps a little too much in favour of Black, but that's a side issue. It's clear that the Armageddon format intrigues and captures the imagination of people who would otherwise not be too interested in watching the game. We need only look back to last November, when just the prospect of Armageddon in the play-off between Carlsen and Caruana sent the media into an unprecedented chess feeding frenzy.

The classical time control was very quick, with only two hours on the clock and a 10-second increment from move 41, which is about as quick as it can be to be rated, so, overall, the spectators still had a good five hours or more of chess per day.

Lots of play-offs suits Magnus Carlsen. He won the tournament comfortably, yet would have had to share first with Ding Liren had only the classical games counted. The world champion won his first six Armageddon encounters before he lost one to Fabiano Caruana. Some suggested this brought to an end Carlsen's 67-game unbeaten run, but as far as I'm concerned he's now up to 68 games undefeated at classical chess. Caruana should have delivered mate in the classical game, but redeemed himself. Ding Liren scored '+2' at classical chess, but achieved the reverse of Carlsen, winning only one and losing six play-offs. A full report follows.

While I don't see this format as the future of chess, it's certainly a useful addition to the tournament scene and I can see it gaining in popularity. The downside is that it devalues the classical games and the overall draw percentage did not improve over a standard tournament. Speed chess experts will naturally be tempted to head for Armageddon and there were a few perfunctory games. I imagine Hikaru Nakamura was quite fed up not to be invited – he might head for Armageddon every time.

A similar format was employed at the FIDE Grand Prix and worked pretty well, but of course play-offs are better suited to knockout tournaments and have always been a part of the World Cup.

If this is what it takes to get chess airtime, then I am fine with it. World Chess, organisers of the last three WCC matches, have succeeded in getting a made-for-television Armageddon KO on Match TV in Russia. They have also succeeded in getting some chess on EuroSport. I'm tempted to use Armageddon in the next London Chess Classic.

I was surprised Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, the world's highest-rated blitz player at the start of the event, did not do better. Good Armageddon technique with White seems to be to head for a position with a small edge, which added to the 3-minute time advantage makes Black's life difficult.

M.Vachier-Lagrave-A.Grischuk
Norway Chess (Armageddon) 2019
Grünfeld Defence

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 c6 5 d4 d5 6 cxd5 cxd5 7 ♘e5 ♘e4

7...0-0 8 ♘c3 ♗f5 was Howell-Jones from last year's British KO where Black was OK.
8 ♘d2

Avoiding 8 ♘c3 ♘xc3 9 bxc3, and intending 8...♘xd2 9 ♗xd2 0-0 10 ♖c1.
8...♘f6!? 9 ♕a4+ ♗d7 10 ♕b3 ♘c6 11 ♘df3 ♘a5 12 ♕a3 0-0 13 ♗d2 ♘c6 14 0-0 ♘e4 15 ♗f4 ♘xe5

It was hard to judge in a blitz game, but it seems that trying to be active was best. After 15...f6! 16 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 17 ♖ac1 e6 Black has a decent sort of Stonewall position with his bad bishop in the box and he can expand on the kingside.
16 ♘xe5 ♗b5 17 ♖fe1 ♖c8 18 ♖ac1 ♖xc1 19 ♖xc1 ♗xe2 20 ♕xa7 ♗a6

20...g5!? 21 ♗e3 f6 was worth a thought.
21 b4!

Planning a2-a4 and b4-b5.
21...♕e8!

MVL had missed this, but fortunately he has a strong response.
22 ♘c6! g5 23 ♗e3 ♘d6 24 a4 bxc6?

MVL makes his look like a forced loss. The best chance was 24...♗c4 25 ♘e5 h6 26 ♘xc4 dxc4 27 b5 or 24...♗e2.
25 ♕xa6 ♘c4

26 ♖xc4! dxc4 27 ♗xc6 ♕b8 28 ♕xc4 ♖c8 29 a5 ♕c7

The a-pawn is also too powerful after 29...♖xc6 30 ♕xc6 ♕xb4 31 ♕a8+ ♗f8 32 a6.
30 a6! e6

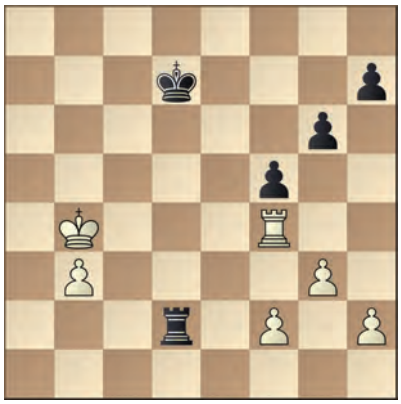
If 30...♕xc6 31 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 32 b5 and the two connected pawns will prevail.
31 b5 ♕a5 32 ♔g2 h6 33 d5! exd5 34 ♕xd5 ♖d8 35 ♕xd8+! 1-0

Carlsen Makes 250 New Friends

The Lindores Abbey Masters was a huge success and what a boon for Scottish chess as four of the world's best arrived at Lindores Abbey near Perth to play a weekend of rapid chess. The tournament was held in the distillery itself and many Scottish players as well as some English ones visited the Abbey to get a glimpse of the players and enjoy commentary from Genna Sosonko and Danny King – an unlikely combination, but an enjoyable one.

Magnus Carlsen prevailed – just – after facing strong resistance from Sergey Karjakin, Vishy Anand and Ding Liren, who should have won the tournament after outplaying Carlsen and then letting him off the hook. Jon Speelman dissects the endgame in detail, but my instinct at the time was that Ding made his task more difficult at the outset of the rook ending even if he was still winning afterwards. I was commentating in the well-stocked bar adjoining the distillery. My first instinct was: rooks belong behind passed pawns, don't they?

When this position arose...



...I was advocating 36 ♔c3! ♖e2 37 ♖d4+ ♔c6 38 ♖d2 ♖e1 39 ♔c4 ♖e4+ 40 ♔d3 ♖e1 41 f4, and if 41...♔d5 42.♖e2 with ♖e7 and b3-b4 to follow.

Whether there was some special aroma slipping out of the vats, or it was the wonderful hospitality shown by the McKenzie Smith family and their colleagues, or even the blissfully cool and clean air of Lindores, there was some great chess. Carlsen and Karjakin playing this epic game that was quickly dubbed the 'Whisky Immortal'. I gave up commentating on this one when Carlsen sacrificed his queen as the moves came so quick the assessment was just way above my pay grade.

Carlsen was awarded a cask of Lindores Abbey whisky which should be maturing in three or four years. A cask contains 250 or so bottles, one for each of his new friends.

M.Carlsen-S.Karjakin
Lindores Abbey (rapid) 2019
Queen's Pawn Opening

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c3 ♘bd7 7 ♗f4

The players really did play right in the heart of the Lindores Abbey Distillery. Was it the aroma from the vats that inspired Magnus and Sergey to produce such breathtaking chess?

It just goes to show that if you want to fight, it doesn't always matter what opening you play.

7...c5 8 ♘e5 ♕b6

8...♘h5!? is far from ridiculous.

9 ♕b3 cxd4 10 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 11 cxd4

White can try to play for an advantage as his advanced knight is well placed and he will reach the open c-file first.

11...♘e4

11...♗f5!? 12 a4 a5 13 ♖c1 ♖fc8 14 ♘c3 ♘e4 looks solid enough for Black.

12 ♖c1 ♘d6 13 ♘c3

13...♗e6

13...♘f5 14 e3 g5 15 ♗xg5 f6 16 g4 ♘d6 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♗xd5+ e6 was an intriguing possibility, when again Black should be fine.

14 a4 a5 15 h4

Ruling out ...g5 ideas.

15...♖fc8 16 b3!

Controlling c4 and Black's a5-pawn might be weak one day as he can't play ...b6.

16...♖c7 17 ♘b5

17 ♘a2!? was another possibility.

17...♖xc1+ 18 ♖xc1 ♘xb5 19 axb5 ♖c8 20 ♖c5! ♔f8! 21 e4

Magnus said afterwards he miscalculated something around here and realised he was not better, but in any event he had decided to enter this myriad of complications: "To see what happens".

21...a4

21...dxe4 22 ♗xe4 ♖d8 was solid and good, and I'm so pleased Sergey did not play it.

22 exd5!?

After 22 bxa4 ♘xa4 23 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 24 exd5 ♘c3 Black cannot come to any harm. Magnus decided to play for a win which involves allowing Sergey to promote his a-pawn.

22...♖xc5

22...a3 23 dxe6 a2 24 ♘d7+ ♔e8 (and not 24...♘xd7?? 25 exd7 ♖d8 26 ♖c8) 25 ♘xb6 a1♕+ 26 ♔h2 ♖d8 27 ♗c6+!! is an incredible

Magnus Carlsen is all smiles after winning his fifth tournament of the year at Lindores Abbey.

Drew McKenzie Smith helped put the champ in high spirits, as did Mikhail Tal's former chess set.

idea which leads to equality after 27...bxc6 (Black can also play 27...♔f8) 28 bxc6 ♕a2 29 ♗e3 ♕xb3 30 c7 ♕xe6 31 cxd8♕+ (or 31 c8♕ ♕xb6) 31...♔xd8 32 ♖c8+.

23 dxc5 a3

A touchdown is imminent, but Carlsen acquires bishop, knight and a mass of pawns.

24 dxe6 a2 25 ♘d7+!

25...♔e8!

25...♘xd7? 26 exd7 a1♕+ 27 ♔h2 ♕d4 28 ♗d6!! wins.

26 ♘xb6

It transpired that 26 cxb6 a1♕+ 27 ♔h2 fxe6 28 ♘c5 would be less challenging for Black.

26...a1♕+ 27 ♔h2 ♗e5 28 ♗e3 fxe6 29 ♗xb7

The white pawn phalanx will take some stopping, particularly with four minutes on the clock, although Carlsen had much less. Karjakin is not called the Minister of Defence for nothing.

29...♗d4!

30 ♘c4!?

Astonishing. Instead, 30 c6 ♗xe3 31 c7 ♗xf2 32 c8♕+ ♔f7 (threat: 33...♕g1+ and 34...♕xg3 mate) 33 ♗g2 ♗xb6 is a draw, but Carlsen pushes again.

30...♗xe3 31 ♘xe3 ♕b2

31...♕e1 32 ♔g2 ♔d8 33 b6 ♕b4 34 ♗f3 ♕xc5 35 b7 ♔c7 is given as '-3' by the engines, but I don't see a way to make progress and Carlsen thought he had a fortress here.

32 ♔g2 ♕xb3 33 b6 ♕b5 34 ♗f3 ♔d8 35 b7 ♔c7 36 c6

Carlsen stabilises the kingside to ensure his fortress holds as his minor pieces have no way to support the pawn duo, only maintain it, while now if 36...e5? 37 ♘d5+ ♔d6 38 ♗e4 wins.

36...♕b4 37 g4

Preparing ♘e3-f1-g3, ruling out ...e5-e4 forever.

37...♕d4 38 ♘f1 h5 39 gxh5 gxh5 40 ♘g3

40...e5

White also has a fortress after 40...♕xh4 41 ♘xh5 e5 42 ♘g3.

41 ♘e4 ♕c4 42 ♘g5 ♔b8 43 ♗e4 ♕e2 44 ♗f5 e4 45 ♘xe4 ♕c4 46 ♘g3 ♕xc6+ 47 ♗e4 ♕f6 48 ♘xh5 ♕xh4 49 ♘g3 ½-½

Common Sense Prevails

While sponsorship is unfortunately lacking this year, I'm pleased that Michael Adams and David Howell will be playing at Torquay, as well as a smattering of some of our other leading players. I'm certain plenty of readers will also be at the British. Numbers were looking likely to suffer after the organisers moved the late entry deadline forward to 1st June without sufficiently publicising the fact. These days in the ECF, however, common sense can prevail, so kudos to David Eustace and Mike Truran for agreeing to scrap the late entry fee in June and refund those who had already paid it.

60 Seconds with...

Danny Rosenbaum

Born: 2nd August 1961, London.

Place of residence: London and Bedford.

Occupation: I've just become the Social Media Manager for the ECF and the 4NCL.

Enjoyable? Just started, but so far, so good!

And home life? Married to a wonderful wife (bonus: she loves chess), with four terrific step-children.

But sometimes good to escape to: I love Japan and studied briefly in Kyoto – my favourite city. Went to a few shogi clubs over there, which was great fun.

Sports played or followed: I like nearly all sports, but only really follow football, and, in particular, Liverpool FC. Many years back, I played 5-a-side where my style of play was likened to the Leeds hard man Norman Hunter!

A favourite novel? Probably *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus. Right up there, however, are *Sophie's Choice* by Styron, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Kesey, and the le Carré novels that feature George Smiley.

Piece of music? In general, nearly anything by The Clash or The Stranglers, but if I had to pick one track then 'One Kind of Love' by Brian Wilson.

Film or TV series? *Billions.*

What's the best thing about playing chess? When you get the feeling of total immersion or, more colloquially, of being 'in the zone'.

And the worst? The feeling of not improving.

Your best move? As a relatively poor player, I won't get ideas above my station here and give myself any exclamation marks. Although not strictly a move, my best piece of play was to offer a draw to a player over 50 ECF grading points higher than me, which he accepted. When I got home *Fritz* said he was '+3',

But less memorable than your worst move? I definitely have played worse moves than this and credit must go to my opponent Peter Gill from Bedford for a fine game, but 16...♕d5?? turned a miserable position into a totally hopeless one.

P.Gill-D.Rosenbaum
Bedfordshire League 2016
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♗d7 5 ♘f3 ♗c6 6 ♗d3 ♘d7 7 0-0 ♘gf6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 c3 0-0 10 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 11 ♖e1 ♘d5 12 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 13 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14 ♘g5+ ♔g6 15 ♕g4 ♔h6 16 ♖e3

16...♕d5??

16...g6 would have fought on, as White has no more than a draw after 17 ♖h3+ (or 17 ♕f4 ♔g7 18 ♕e5+ f6 19 ♘xe6+ ♔g8 20 ♕g3 ♕d6 and Black is very much alive) 17 ..♔g7 18 ♖h7+ ♔g8 19 ♕h4 ♘f5.
17 ♖h3+ ♔g6 18 ♘e4+ 1-0

And a highly memorable opponent? That has to be GM Timur Gareyev, the Blindfold King. In 2017, I was one of 10 players he played simultaneously whilst blindfolded in an event at The Reform Club in London. He won 9 and drew only one. He's an amazing guy off the chess board as well.

Favourite game of all time? Chigorin-Mortimer, Paris 1900. I have always had a soft spot for Chigorin and although this game may not have 'best play', it kept me entertained.

The best three chess books: *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins* by Jonathan Rowson (highly readable and thought-provoking); *Best Play: A New Method for Discovering the Strongest Move* by Alexander Shashin (highly thought-provoking and not totally unreadable); *Chess Tactics from Scratch* by Martin Weteschnik (the book I have found of most practical benefit – and it's highly readable).

Is FIDE doing a good job? It's fairly early days for the new team at the top. So, too early to pass judgement.

Any advice for them or the ECF? Think outside the box.

Can chess make one happy? Yes, very much so, but bear in mind the words of Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi: "It [happiness] does not depend on outside events, but, rather, on how we interpret them."

A tip please for the club player: Improve your chess vision. Find the way you feel is most enjoyable, try to make it a little challenging and a regular feature of every day. It could be tactics, it could be trying to see how far you go playing blindfold, or whatever works best.

Ed. – Don't forget to follow Danny on Twitter: @ecfchess and @4NCL

In the August issue of *CHESS Magazine*:

An eighth success for Vassily Ivanchuk at the Capabalanca Memorial

Phil Wood reminisces with Ben Graff

Matthew Lunn on Pattern Recognition

Seventh Heaven

Magnus Carlsen had plenty to celebrate after winning again, and on home soil

Magnus Carlsen was once again simply too pragmatic and too strong, the champ winning his seventh tournament in a row and sixth of 2019 at the Altibox Norway event. Carlsen has often struggled on home soil, only winning one of the previous six editions of the tournament, but must have felt pretty confident in advance due to the new format being trialled.

In a bid to ensure that every game would have a decisive result, the Norwegian organisers elected to award two points for a win and, especially, to force drawn games to be replayed after only a short gap, the two contestants moving straight into Armageddon while retaining their original colours.

Each Armageddon encounter was worth one and a half points to the victor; just half for the loser. Notably the time control wasn't the standard 5 vs 4 or 6 vs 5, but rather White had 10 minutes to Black's seven with draw odds (there was also a three-second increment per move from move 61). The slightly slower rate of play meant that the average viewer had more chance of being able to follow the commentary of the Armageddon encounters, but did also seem to give Black an advantage or at least Black scored better than one might have expected. John Saunders presents some fascinating statistics on that front much later in these pages.

Certainly if a player fancied themselves as the stronger on the speed front, they were likely to play solidly as Black, or even White, being happy to reach the Armageddon encounter as quickly as possible. Whilst there was unsurprisingly a lack of risk-taking from those with the black pieces, only four games were drawn in under 30 moves and Alexander Grischuk was to regret an early repetition as he went on to lose the resulting Armageddon encounter to Wesley So.

Had the tournament been scored classically, Ding Liren would have joined Carlsen in an undefeated first place on '+2'. Ding produced a fine positional tour de force to overcome Fabiano Caruana and utterly annihilated Shakhriyar Mamedyarov's Grünfeld, but struggled terribly in the Armageddon phase and only actually finished sixth, in contrast to compatriot Yu Yangyi who excelled when the play speeded up as he had his finest ever result, sharing second place with Levon Aronian.

Vishy Anand certainly sympathised with Ding while having some doubts about the format, as he pointed out that: "My whole life, you think that if you work for four hours that should count for more than if you work for 20 minutes. For me, my scales are a bit confused, let's say. Having said that, if this is a better format for television or something, then fine. But I am used to seeing it as some kind of injustice. It feels wrong that Ding is in fourth place, with '+2'. Then again, I am not saying it's unfair, because we knew what we were getting into, but something feels wrong."

There was never really any doubt as to who would finish first, though, at least not once Carlsen had performed defensive miracles against Levon Aronian in the second round, a gripping encounter in which Aronian had played brilliantly to obtain a winning position and which we'll enjoy next month.

In the end the champ landed up claiming first place with a round to spare. Having finished second with Aronian behind Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the opening blitz tournament, Carlsen enjoyed five whites and notably avoided touching his e-pawn before the Armageddon stage. Instead, 1 d4 was Carlsen's weapon of choice, bar against Ding Liren, which was but one game where his play was both notably energetic and *AlphaZero*esque. Carlsen would later pay tribute to the inspiration gained from his "Heroes recently, which are *AlphaZero* and also one of my seconds from the world championship, Dubov, who has a lot of these ideas with sacrifices in the opening."

M.Carlsen-Ding Liren
Round 6
English Opening

1 c4 ♘f6 2 g3 e5 3 ♗g2 c6 4 d4 e4 5 ♕b3!?

White usually prefers the immediate 5 ♘c3, but Carlsen wants to go down a much less explored path.

5...d5 6 ♘c3 dxc4 7 ♕xc4 b5 8 ♕b3 ♕xd4

Ding Liren takes up the challenge, grabbing the proffered pawn, and already after White's logical next we are in uncharted territory.

9 ♗e3 ♕b4

This seems best, or at least 9...♕e5 10 ♗f4 ♕e7 11 ♗g5 is quite an annoying pin.

10 ♗d2!?

10 ♕c2 ♗f5 11 ♘h3 was by no means ridiculous, but Carlsen wants to force the pace and so obtain a half-open a-file to exploit.

10...♕xb3 11 axb3 ♗f5 12 g4! ♗xg4 13 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 14 ♗xe4

The silicon monster isn't initially totally convinced by White's play, but to the human eye his gambit approach appears strong. Black will do well to untangle his queenside and may also come under pressure on the other wing. Certainly after **14...g6!? 15 ♗c3 ♖g8 16 b4 a6 17 e3 ♗g7 18 ♘e2 ♗xe2 19 ♔xe2 ♖a7 20 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 21 ♖hc1 ♖c7** and then another *AlphaZero*-like move in **22 h4** White had pressure, but Ding remained resolute and was never in any real danger (½-½ 60).

While, as pointed out before by John Saunders in these pages, Carlsen's play of late has often resembled that of Alekhine, he still very much possesses a Capablanca-like technical grasp, making even endings with opposite-coloured bishops look quite simple.

M.Carlsen-Yu Yangyi
Round 8

A pleasant edge for White you might think, but surely a draw, especially with Black threatening to construct a firm blockade after ...c5? Carlsen, however, makes White's actually large advantage look like a forced win.

24 c5! ♗e7 25 ♔f1 f5 26 ♔e2 g5

Desperately looking for some counterplay. Black might have tried to stay solid, but after 26...♔f8 27 ♖b1 (preventing ...♖c7 for a move) 27...♗f6 28 ♔d3 ♖c7 29 a4! ♔e7 30 a5 ♔d7 31 ♖b8 it's hard to believe he would have survived: for example, 31...h6 32 a6 g6 33 ♔c4 h5 34 ♖a8! h4 35 ♗xc6+! ♔xc6 36 d5+ ♔d7 37 d6, winning the a-pawn and the game.

27 h3 ♔g7 28 ♔d3 ♔g6 29 ♖b1 h5 30 ♖b7 ♗f6 31 ♖d7!

A classy move. White prevents any notion of ...♖d8 while preparing to regroup his bishop, and with some effect.

31...g4 32 ♗d1 ♔g5

32...♗h4!? was worth a try, with the idea of 33 g3 ♖d8 34 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 35 hxg4 fxg4 36 ♗a4 h4 with definite chances to draw, but after 33 f3! White should still be able to win, since 33...gxh3 34 gxh3 ♖d8 35 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 36 ♗a4 now leaves him far too far ahead in the race after 36...♔g5 37 ♗xc6 ♔h4 38 d5 ♔xh3 39 d6 ♔g3 40 ♗d5.

33 ♗a4 f4 34 f3!

Once again, a key move, preventing Black from using his pawns to prise open the kingside.

34...♖e8

Alternatively, 34...gxf3 35 gxf3 ♔h4 36 ♖xf7 ♗g5 37 ♖xa7 ♔xh3 38 d5! and wins.

35 fxg4

Having spotted a way to keep control, Carlsen switches the bishop back. 35 ♗xc6 ♖e3+ 36 ♔c4 would also have sufficed, although it's much easier for a silicon than human entity to quickly spot 36...g3 37 ♖xf7 ♖e2 38 ♗e4! ♖xg2 39 h4+! ♔xh4 40 ♖xf6 ♖g1 41 ♖g6 when running low on time.

35...hxg4 36 hxg4 ♖e6

Now White can hold the kingside, but so would he have after 36...♔xg4 37 ♗xc6.

37 ♗d1 ♖e3+ 38 ♔c4 a5 39 ♗f3!

Carlsen has realised that, as so often, White's connected passed pawns will now easily trump Black's sole runner.

39...♖a3 40 ♗xc6 ♖xa2 41 ♗e4 a4 42 c6 ♖a1 43 c7 a3 44 ♔b3 1-0

Magnus Carlsen played most creatively in the early stages against Ding Liren, but the Chinese star held firm, at least until the Armageddon encounter in which he was outplayed.

Carlsen's other classical win saw him once again completely outplay Alexander Grischuk.

M.Carlsen-A.Grischuk
Round 3
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 ♗g7 7 ♗e3 c5 8 ♖c1 ♕a5

The very next round, albeit after the first rest day, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov preferred the ambitious 8...0-0 9 ♘f3 ♘d7 10 ♗e2 ♕a5 and after 11 0-0 ♕xa2 12 ♘d2! ♕a5 13 h4!? b5 14 h5 ♗b7 15 h6 ♗h8 16 e5! White's play was once again very much in the style of *AlphaZero*, leaving him with promising compensation in Carlsen-Mamedyarov, which was later drawn after a tough fight.

9 ♕d2 0-0 10 ♘f3 ♗g4

10...♖d8!? is likely a more critical test, with the idea of 11 d5 e6 12 ♗g5 f6, with a most unbalanced and unclear middlegame in prospect.

11 d5 b5!?

Offering the c-pawn in a bid to prevent White from constructing an ideal centre after c3-c4.

12 ♗e2

12 ♗xc5 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 ♖c8 14 ♗b4 ♕c7 is messy and must offer reasonable compensation.

12...♘d7 13 0-0 ♗xf3

Grischuk continues to unbalance the position, but he might also have begun with the calm 13...♖ad8, challenging White to find a better route than 14 h3 (maybe 14 c4 has to be tried) 14...♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 c4 with a tempo-up version of the game for Black.

14 ♗xf3 c4 15 ♗e2 ♖fd8?

Grischuk had seemingly long been on his own and this was not a great new move as the rook was required on f8 to help defend its king. Instead, 15...♕a3 (it's also possible to begin with 15...♖ad8!?, intending 16 f4 ♕a3 17 e5 ♘b6) 16 f4 ♘c5 17 e5 ♖ad8 left Black fairly well coordinated before 18 ♗f3? (18 ♕d4! ♘e6 19 ♕xa7 ♕xa7 20 ♗xa7 ♖xd5 21 ♗e3 is the critical line, when White might hope to put the bishop-pair to good use) 18...f6! 19 e6 f5! saw him taking over in Kantorik-Hlas, Zvolen 2000.

16 f4 ♘b6

Perhaps Black could still have tried 16...♕a3 17 e5 ♘c5 (17...♘b6 18 ♗f3 ♘xd5? 19 ♗xd5 e6 20 ♗xa8 ♖xd2 21 ♗xd2 gives White too much for the queen), even if 18 ♗f3 ♘d3 19 ♖b1 ♖ab8 20 ♗d4 leaves White in control and ready to advance on the kingside.

17 ♗f3 ♕a3 18 h4!

Long before Demis Hassabis was born, this advance was a thematic one in such Exchange Grünfeld positions, preparing to soften up the defences around the under-defended black king.

18...e6 19 h5 ♘a4

Likewise, White is doing very well after 19...exd5 20 e5! ♖ab8 21 ♗d4 followed by ♕f2 and f4-f5 and/or ♕h4.

20 hxg6 hxg6 21 f5!

Grischuk was hoping to stem the tide by giving up the exchange with 21 e5 ♖xd5 22 ♗xd5 ♖d8, but this is a strong pawn sacrifice.

21...exf5

21...♘xc3? loses to 22 fxe6 fxe6 23 ♗g4 and 21...♗xc3 22 ♕f2 is also most uncomfortable for Black, who must try 22...♗e5! according to the engines, and not 22...exd5?, which is poleaxed by 23 ♖xc3! ♘xc3 24 fxg6 fxg6 25 ♗c5 ♕xa2 26 ♕h4 ♕d2 27 ♗g4.

22 exf5 ♕d6

Even bringing the queen back won't be enough to save Black from the onslaught.

23 ♗f4 ♕b6+ 24 ♔h1 gxf5

Desperately hoping to keep the f-file closed for a few moves. 24...♕f6 was no better, in view of 25 fxg6 ♕xg6 26 d6 ♖ab8 27 d7 ♖b6 28 ♖ce1 ♖e6 29 ♖xe6, and if 29...♕xe6 30 ♖e1! ♕xd7 31 ♕xd7 ♖xd7 32 ♖e8+ ♗f8 33 ♗h6 or 29...fxe6 30 ♕d6 ♗f8 31 ♕e5 ♕h7+ 32 ♗h2 ♕xd7 33 ♗e4 when the black king is left hopelessly exposed to the elements.

25 d6! ♖ab8 26 ♗d5

Kasparovian play. Carlsen has driven a bridgehead deep into the black position and now moves to finish off the hapless black monarch.

26...♘c5 27 ♗g3

27...♘e6

White's last seemingly allowed 27...♘e4, but then Carlsen had prepared the powerful blow 28 ♗xe4 fxe4 29 ♖xf7! ♔xf7 30 ♕d5+, and if 30...♔g6 31 ♕xe4+ ♔f7 32 ♖f1+ ♔g8 33 ♕e6+ ♔h7 34 ♖f4 with a decisive attack.

28 ♖xf5 ♖xd6 29 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 30 ♕e3 ♕b6 31 ♕f3

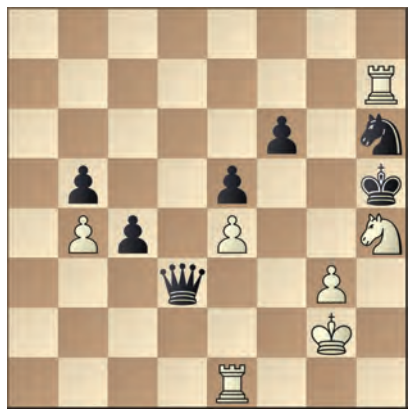
He might have won the exchange, but that's no reason for White to take his foot off the gas and Carlsen quickly finished things off on the light squares.

31...♖f8 32 ♖f1 ♘d8 33 ♖h5 ♕c7 34 ♕e4 1-0

Levon Aronian tied for second with Yu Yangi in Stavanager. The Armenian would have finished much closer to Carlsen had he not missed several wins against him, as we'll see next time.

As subscribers receive this issue, the show will have moved on to a welcome addition to the Grand Chess Tour, a classical tournament in Zagreb. Few would bet against Carlsen winning his seventh tournament of the year, but it should be said that the champ wasn't entirely happy with how he played at times in Norway, admitting that: "My performance in the event has been mediocre. There is something missing right now. I shouldn't complain too much, but it has been a mess in the last round." Carlsen clearly didn't enjoy losing a speed encounter to his former challenger and could even have lost his unbeaten classical run at Caruana's hands.

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
Round 9



Having looked slightly worse coming out of the opening, Carlsen had gradually outplayed Caruana, but been unable to exploit a slight advantage. As ever, the American no.1 has defended well and after, say, 49...♔g5 50 ♖g7+ ♔h5 the players might well have agreed a draw, whether immediately or following 51 ♘f3!? ♕c2+! 52 ♔h3 ♕f2 53 g4+! ♘xg4 54 ♖xg4 ♕xf3+ 55 ♖g3. Instead, Carlsen was to badly underestimate the danger on the kingside.

49...c3? 50 ♘f3?

Returning the favour. As pointed out by the world champion, 50 ♘f5 would have won, and if 50...♕d2+ 51 ♔f3! ♕d3+ (51...♕xe1 52 g4+! ♔g6 53 ♖g7# is the hidden point) 52 ♔f2 ♕d2+ 53 ♖e2 when Black is out of meaningful checks and must resign.

50...♕c2+ 51 ♔h3 ♔g6

Having dodged a bullet, Carlsen elects to force a draw as the innovative time control of two hours for all the moves followed by an extra 10 seconds a move from 40 move really made its presence felt. As pointed out by the ultra-calm analysis engine, with a proper second time control Carlsen might well have found 51...♕b3! 52 ♘h4 ♕g8! (backwards queen moves are never easy to spot...) 53 ♖c7 ♘f7 54 ♖xc3 ♘g5+ 55 ♔g2 ♕a2+ 56 ♔h1 ♘xe4 with excellent chances to polish off the highly exposed white king.

52 ♖c7 ♘f7 53 ♘h4+

Caruana doesn't need to be asked twice and, most impressively, would go on to outplay Carlsen in the resulting Armageddon game to inflict on the champ his only defeat of the tournament.

53...♔g7 54 ♘f5+ ♔g6 55 ♘h4+ ♔g7 56 ♘f5+ ½-½

Until the final round Carlsen also greatly impressed in the Armageddon, a format where he, like many white players, was happy to put Black under gradual pressure. That

worked well for the Norwegian genius, but it will be interesting to see if, should a 10 vs 7 format be repeated, others in the future prefer to serve matters up a little more directly as White, aiming to force Black into some complex calculation at a relatively early stage. What was certainly clear in Stavanger was that the Armageddon chess was pretty exciting, with blunders, missed chances, and even the odd fine attacking win.

Ding Liren-W.So
Round 1 (Armageddon)
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♖b1

Quite a critical choice and one which allows Black to trot out less theory than in that heavily analysed main line of the Semi-Tarrasch, 7 ♘f3 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗b4+ 9 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10 ♕xd2 0-0.

7...♗e7 8 ♘f3 0-0 9 ♗c4 a6 10 a4 ♕c7 11 ♗e2

Wisely getting off the c-file, although there was no reason not to go to d3 straightaway.

11...b6 12 0-0 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♗b7 14 ♗d3 ♘c6

Now Black threatens ...♘b4, so Ding produces some deft manoeuvres with his queen's rook.

15 ♖b3!? ♘a5 16 ♖b2 ♘c6 17 ♖d2 ♖fd8

Black would surely have been OK after 17...♘b4! 18 ♗b1 a5.

18 ♗b2 ♖ac8?

Slow, and by now So really needed to find 18...♘b4 19 ♗b1 ♗f6! to keep White's central and kingside ambitions in check.

19 d5!

A highly thematic breakthrough.

19...♘b4 20 ♗b1 exd5 21 e5!

Definite shades of that classic Polugaevsky-Tal encounter as White sacrifices a pawn for a highly dangerous attack.

21...g6 22 ♖e1?

22 e6! would have been strong, and if 22...fxe6 23 ♘d4 e5 24 ♕g4!.

22...d4! 23 e6!

Both sides continue most energetically, aiming to maximise their activity.

23...f6?

Black would have been OK after 23...fxe6 24 ♖xe6 ♗d5 25 ♖e1 ♗f6, whereas now he is swiftly put to the sword.

24 ♘xd4 ♘c6 25 ♘f5!!

A lovely blow, the main point of which is 25...gxf5 26 ♕h5 ♖xd2 27 ♕f7+ ♔h8 28 ♗xf5, mating.

25...♖xd2 26 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 27 ♕xd2 ♔g7 28 ♕f4 ♖f8 29 h4!

Introducing a further unit into the attack. White's pressure is simply far too great for Black to deal with and how Ding must have wished he could have played with such a free hand in his remaining Armageddon encounters.

29...♗c8 30 h5 ♘e5 31 ♖xe5! fxe5 32 ♕xe5+ ♔h6 33 hxg6 hxg6 34 ♕h2+ ♔g5 35 ♕g3+ 1-0

A modern classic in the Semi-Tarrasch structure and reminder of just how strong Ding can be when allowed to attack.

The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty openings as played by International Masters and Grandmasters in May

1	=	Reti Opening	*173 games*
2	⇧	Caro-Kann Defence	*115 games*
3	⇧	King's Indian Defence	*102 games*
4	⇩	Sicilian, Najdorf	*97 games*
5	⇩	Queen's Gambit Declined	*97 games*
6	⇩	1 d4 ♘f6 sidelines	*94 games*
7	⇧	English, 1...e5	*92 games*
8	=	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 d6 sidelines	*82 games*
9	⇧	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 sidelines	*71 games*
10	=	Slav Defence	*71 games*
11	⇧	Ruy Lopez, Berlin Def.	*68 games*
12	⇩	Nimzo-Indian Defence	*67 games*
13	⇩	English, 1...c5	*61 games*
14	⇧	Petroff Defence, 3 ♘xe5	*54 games*
15	⇩	English, 1...♘f6	*52 games*
16	=	Catalan Opening	*49 games*
17	⇩	English, 1...e6	*48 games*
18	⇩	Giuoco Piano	*44 games*
19	⇧	1 d4 d5 sidelines	*41 games*
20	⇩	Queen's Indian Defence	*40 games*

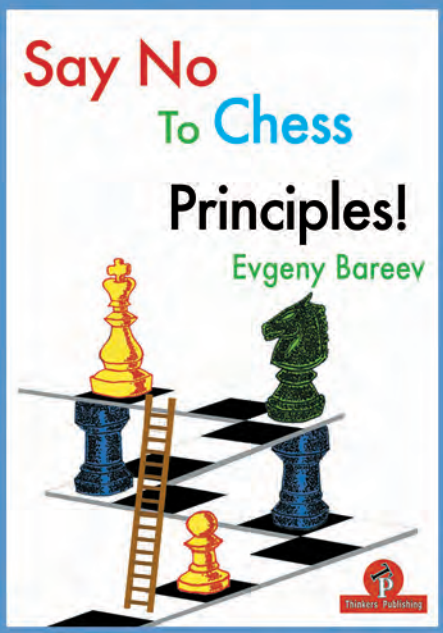
2,611 games played between 1-31 May where both players were rated over 2400 Elo

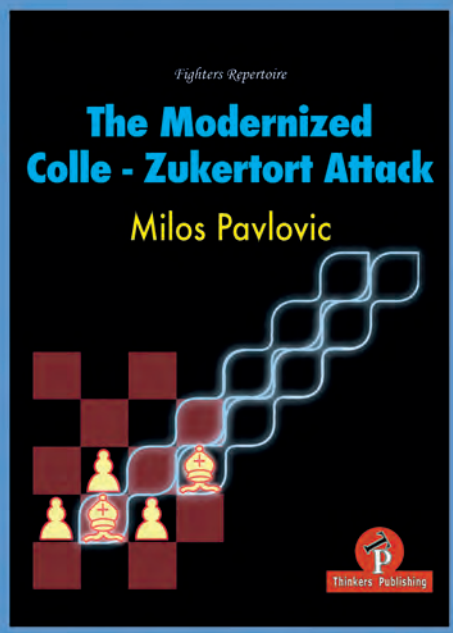
Source: TWIC. Compiled by *HIARCS 14.*

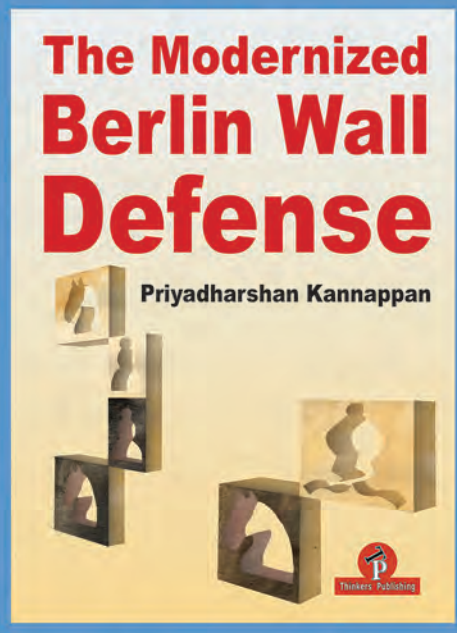
In association with *HIARCS Chess Explorer* - hiarcs.com and *The Week in Chess* -- theweekinchess.com

7th Norway Chess 2019 Stavanger - Monday 3rd June - Friday 14th June

	Player	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts
1	Magnus Carlsen	2875	X	2	½ 1	½ 0	½ 1	½ 1	½ 1	½ 1	½ 1	2	**13½**
2	Yu Yangyi	2738	0	X	½ 0	½ 1	0	½ 1	½ 1	½ 1	2	2	**10½**
3	Levon Aronian	2752	½ 0	½ 1	X	0	½ 1	½ 1	½ 0	½ 1	2	½ 1	**10½**
4	Fabiano Caruana	2819	½ 1	½ 0	2	X	½ 0	0	2	½ 1	½ 0	½ 1	**10**
5	Wesley So	2754	½ 0	2	½ 0	½ 1	X	½ 0	½ 1	½ 0	½ 1	½ 1	**10**
6	Ding Liren	2805	½ 0	½ 0	½ 0	2	½ 1	X	½ 0	½ 0	2	½ 0	**8½**
7	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	2779	½ 0	½ 0	½ 1	0	½ 0	½ 1	X	½ 0	½ 1	½ 1	**8**
8	Viswanathan Anand	2767	½ 0	½ 0	½ 0	½ 0	½ 1	½ 1	½ 1	X	0	½ 1	**8**
9	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	2774	½ 0	0	0	½ 1	½ 0	0	½ 0	2	X	½ 0	**5½**
10	Alexander Grischuk	2775	0	0	½ 0	½ 0	½ 0	½ 1	½ 0	½ 0	½ 1	X	**5½**







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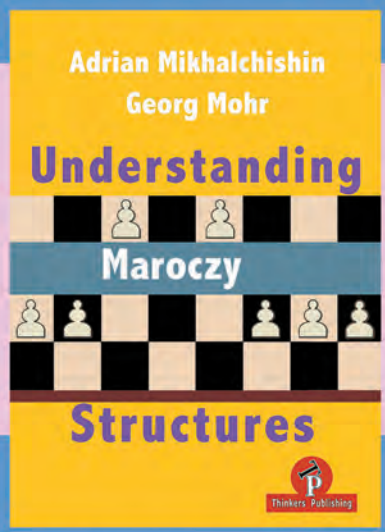

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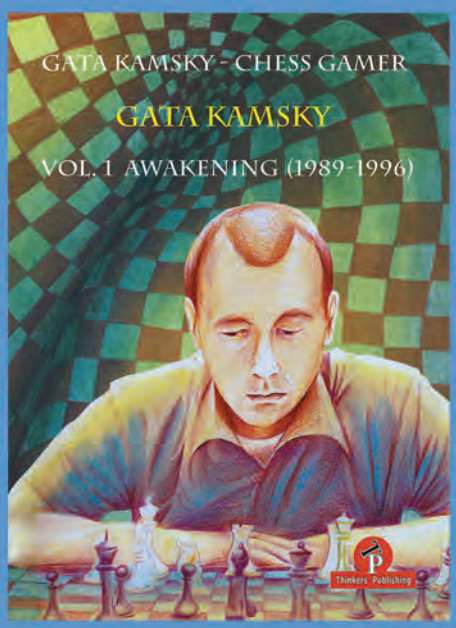
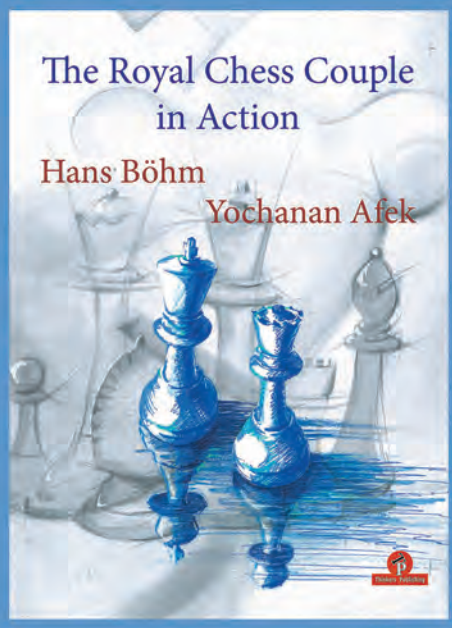
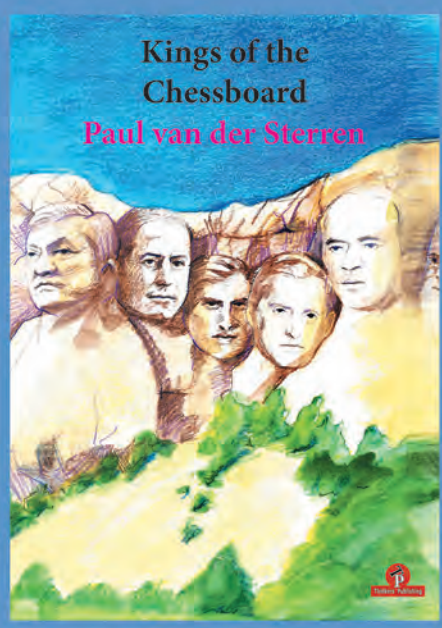






Guildford
The Inside Story

4NCL-winning supremo Roger Emerson explains what makes his team tick so well

A year ago Leonard Barden, in his *Guardian* column, described our sixth 4NCL title in a row as "A tad monotonous", but he held out hopes for a sterner test in 2018/19 from newly promoted Manx Liberty. Nigel Povah and I certainly recognised the threat, so already in June of last year we were thinking about how we might meet this challenge.

Former world women's champion Ety Stefanova, who had been a key member of the Guildford team for the past six seasons, was expecting a baby in October, so we needed a strong replacement. We quickly secured the services of Lizzie Paehtz and Sophie Milliet, and by the end of July we had agreement from another former world champion, Hou Yifan, to play the final weekend, after her Oxford exams. Then, in October 2018, after the Bundesliga dates had been finalised, we received expressions of interest from Mickey Adams and Luke McShane, so helping us to build up a formidable line-up for the final weekend.

Just looking at Guildford I's scores over the first eight rounds, you might think that every match was easy, but that was far from the case; both Wood Green and White Rose gave us a tough fight. Over the years we have had scares against most of the first division's regular teams, but particularly White Rose. They were in fact the last team to beat Guildford I, in round 9 of the 2011/12 season, so snuffing out our faint hopes of challenging for the title that year. So it was a pleasure, for me at least, to see your editor's team edge out Manx Liberty 4½-3½ in round 8 back in March. That took some pressure off us for the final weekend, but we still needed to see off both Manx Liberty and the dangerous Cheddleton team.

That final weekend in early May clashed with exams, so we were missing almost all our juniors. The upside was that we could field nearly all the female members of our squad, including Ety Stefanova who had just shown her toughness against chronic lack of sleep and the other after-effects of a new baby by sharing a five-way tie for top score in the European Women's Chess Championship.

Matthew Wadsworth came on the Sunday just to play the one game he needed to win to clinch a GM norm. Arriving at Telford station minutes before the 1.00pm start, following a train journey of several hours, Matthew played a tense game with James Jackson of Barbican. With both players short of time coming up to the time control, they reached this critical position, where Black seems to be invading the white position:

Matthew continued nervelessly: **35 ♘xc7 ♖f6 36 ♘e6 ♔g8 37 ♘d4 ♘xd4 38 ♗xd4 g4 39 ♕h5 ♗d2 40 ♕e8+ ♔h7 41 ♕xe4+**, wrapping up the win and his GM norm in a few more moves.

Congratulations, Matthew!

Sunday also saw Guildford I overcome Cheddleton 6½-1½, despite our first individual loss of the season when Jonathan Hawkins poleaxed Laurent Fressinet. Mickey Adams nursed a slight opening edge against David Howell into a winning advantage, as readers got to enjoy last month, while Luke McShane and Etienne Bacrot also gave their opponents no opportunity for counterplay. Romain Edouard's 20-move win gave us 4/4 with White, while Matthew Sadler and Nick Pert broke down the stubborn defences of Keith Arkell and Fiona Steil-Antoni.

So we went to the now traditional private Sunday dinner for the whole squad, needing only to avoid a 0-8 loss on Monday. I therefore saw no need for waving my Samurai sword. Instead, in view of the number of Frenchmen in the squad, I showed a short video explaining the meaning of 'ça va', by a French comedian looking suspiciously like Laurent Fressinet.

Monday's match against Manx Liberty proved surprisingly trouble-free. In early April I had primed Matthew Sadler with the task of neutralising Manx's expected wild card, Richard Rapport – which Matthew managed with consummate ease. See his annotated game later in these pages. Mickey Adams also had a solid draw on board 2, while on board 3 Luke McShane was involved in a sharp tactical battle in his favourite King's Indian opening.

Notes by Luke McShane

D.Fridman-L.McShane
Manx Liberty vs Guildford
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 0-0 d6 6 c4 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 e4 c6 9 h3 ♕a5

I have tried this line a few times recently, with good results.

10 ♕e2!?

After an exchange on d4, Black almost invariably puts the rook on e8, so it's a bit unusual to put the queen on this square. Although I was 'out of book' here, I assumed correctly that this move was blessed by the engine.

10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8 12 ♖d1 ♘b6

The traditional square for the knight is c5, but I thought there was some mileage in hassling the c4-pawn and perhaps swinging the queen to h5.

13 ♕d3

Sidestepping the rook and preparing b2-b3,

in case Black adds pressure to the c4-pawn.

13...♗d7

I burned a lot of time looking for something more concrete, didn't like anything, and eventually wondered – why not just develop a piece? Typical of what I looked at is the line 13...♕h5 14 ♘de2 (covering h3 indirectly) 14...♕c5 15 b3 d5 16 cxd5 cxd5 17 ♗e3 dxe4 18 ♘xe4 and White is handed an enormous initiative in the centre.

14 ♗f4 ♖ad8 Indirectly defending the d6-pawn, or so I hoped.

15 ♗xd6

Down the rabbit hole we go! There's too much to calculate at the board, but I believed in my position here. After all, my pieces are mobilised and his queen on d3 is still a target. It might have been more uncomfortable to face 15 ♖ac1!? and after 15...♗c8 Black stands slightly worse.

15...♗xh3 16 c5

Obvious enough on its own, but his intended follow-up is clever. Instead, 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 ♗xh3 ♘a4! 18 ♘xa4 ♘xe4 is fine for Black, while 16 ♗c7 ♗xg2 17 ♗xd8 ♗xe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 gives Black a pawn and enough play for the exchange.

16...♗xg2 17 ♘b3!?

An ambitious intermezzo. 17 ♔xg2 ♘a4 18 ♘xa4 ♕xa4 19 f3 is balanced.

17...♕b4

This leads to more scary complications, but I didn't fancy the 'safe' alternative: 17...♕a6 18 ♕xa6 bxa6 19 ♔xg2 ♘c4 20 ♖d4 and White obtains a pleasant endgame.

18 cxb6 ♗xe4 19 ♗xb4 ♗xd3 20 bxa7

It was pretty scary to allow that passed pawn on a7, but I thought I could just about control it.

20...♗f5 21 ♖xd8 ♖xd8

Luke McShane was a real star for Guildford, winning all three games for them in the final weekend while often grinding well as he racked up a most impressive 6½/7 across the season.

22 ♗d6?

I think Fridman couldn't find a win, and miscalculated something in his frustration. After 22 ♖d1 ♖a8 23 ♗e7 ♘d7 24 ♘c5 ♘f8! Black slips away and a7 can't be defended, but 22 ♗c5 was the way to keep the pressure on: 22...♘d7 23 ♗e3 ♖a8 24 a4!? is probably best, when after 24...♗xc3 25 bxc3 b6 26 a5 ♖xa7 27 ♗xb6 ♖a6 28 ♘c5 ♘xc5 29 ♗xc5 White has a small edge in the endgame.

22...♖a8 23 ♗b8 ♘d7 24 ♖d1 ♗f6!

Preventing ♖d8+ and thus threatening to capture on b8, and not 24...♗f8? 25 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 26 ♘a4! when ♘a4-b6 is unstoppable. This doesn't work with the bishop on f6, as ...♗f6-d8 defends comfortably.

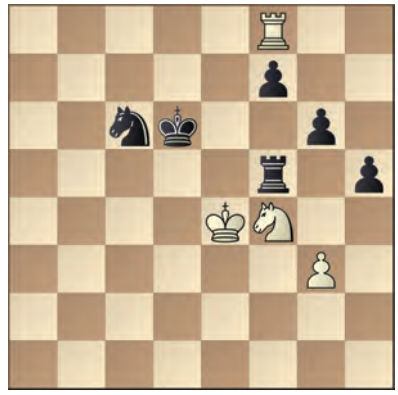
25 ♘e4 ♗e7 26 ♗d6 ♔f8 27 ♗xe7+ ♔xe7 28 ♘d6 ♗g4 29 ♖d4 ♘e5

Threatening ...♘f3+ is handy, but the main point is to protect c8 so that Black can finally eliminate the dreaded pawn.

30 ♔g2 ♖xa7 31 ♖xg4 ♔xd6

With a huge sigh of relief. The tactics are over and Black is a clean pawn up. The technical task is not straightforward (it never is, with knights on the board), but I got there in the end.

32 ♖d4+ ♔e7 33 a4 ♘d7 34 a5 ♘f6 35 ♔f3 ♘d5 36 ♔e2 ♔d6 37 ♖h4 h5 38 ♘d2 ♖a8 39 b4 ♖e8+ 40 ♔d3 ♖e1 41 ♖e4 ♖a1 42 ♘c4+ ♔c7 43 ♘e3 ♖a3+ 44 ♔c4 ♔d6 45 ♖e8 b5+ 46 axb6 ♘xb6+ 47 ♔d4 ♖b3 48 ♘c2 ♘d5 49 ♖d8+ ♔c7 50 ♖f8 ♖f3 51 b5 ♖xf2 52 ♘e1 ♖f5 53 bxc6 ♘b4 54 ♔e4 ♘xc6 55 ♘d3 ♔d6 56 ♘f4



56...♖e5+

Sidestepping 56...♔e7? 57 ♘xg6+! fxg6 58 ♖xf5 gxf5+ 59 ♔xf5 and White escapes.
57 ♔f3 ♔e7 58 ♖a8 ♘d4+ 59 ♔f2 ♘e6 60 ♘d3 ♖f5+ 61 ♔e3 ♔f6 62 ♖a7 ♔g5 63 ♘f2 ♖e5+ 64 ♔f3 ♘d4+ 65 ♔g2 ♔f6 66 ♖a4 ♘f5 67 ♘e4+ ♔g7 68 ♔f3 ♖e7 69 ♖a3 ♘d4+ 70 ♔f4 ♘e2+ 71 ♔f3 ♘g1+ 72 ♔f4 ♘h3+ 73 ♔f3 ♖e5 74 ♘d6 ♖d5 75 ♘c4 ♖d4 76 ♘e5 ♘g5+ 77 ♔f2 ♖d2+ 78 ♔f1 ♖c2 79 ♖e3 ♖a2 80 ♘d7 ♖a4 81 ♔g2 ♖g4 82 ♔h2 ♖d4 83 ♘c5 ♖c4 84 ♘d7 h4 85 gxh4 ♖xh4+ 86 ♔g2 ♖g4+ 87 ♔f1 ♖d4 88 ♘c5 ♖d2 89 ♖e5 f5 90 ♖e7+ ♔h6 91 ♘d7 ♘h3 92 ♘e5 ♘f4 93 ♘f7+ ♔h5 94 ♘e5 ♖a2 95 ♔g1 ♔h4 96 ♖b7 ♖e2 97 ♖b5 ♔h5 98 ♔f1 ♖e3 99 ♘f7 ♘d3 100 ♖d5 ♖e1+ 101 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 102 ♔f2 ♖e7 0-1

On board 4 we had brought in Etienne Bacrot to replace Gawain Jones, who was busy winning the Sigeman tournament in Sweden. Paired against the in-form Mircea-Emilian Parligras, Etienne produced a fine win.

M.Parligras-E.Bacrot
Manx Liberty vs Guildford
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 b6 7 cxd5 ♘xd5 8 ♘xd5 exd5 9 ♗d3 c5 10 dxc5 bxc5 11 0-0 ♗e6 12 ♘e5!? c4 13 ♗e2 ♗f6

In this relatively unexplored position, White needs to attack Black's hanging pawns with 14 b3 ♘d7 15 ♘c6 ♕b6 16 ♘d4, with equality. Instead...

14 ♗f3 ♘a6 15 b3 c3! 16 ♕d3 ♕a5 17 a3 ♘c5 18 ♕c2 ♖ac8 19 b4 ♕a4!

...retained the advanced pawn.

20 ♗d1 ♕xc2 21 ♗xc2

21...g5?

Etienne's only error. Correct was 21...♘e4 22 f3 ♘d2 23 ♖fe1 ♖fd8 with a sizeable advantage.

22 ♗xg5! ♗xg5 23 bxc5 ♖xc5 24 ♖ab1 ♗f6 25 ♘f3 ♗g4 26 ♘d4 ♗xd4 27 exd4 ♖c4 28 h3 ♗d7 29 ♖fd1 ♗a4 30 ♖bc1?

After a fine defensive effort, but with little time left, White blunders. 30 ♗xa4 ♖xa4 31 ♖b3 ♖c8 32 ♖c1 c2 33 ♖b2 should draw.

30...♗xc2 31 ♖xc2 ♖b8 32 ♔f1 ♖b3 33 ♔a2 ♖xa3 34 ♔d3 ♔g7

Romain Edouard is another of Guildford's big-hitters and like all his team-mates, bar one, would end the season undefeated. Calculation and endgame prowess are two of Romain's strengths.

35 ♖b1

A final defensive error in a difficult position.

35...♖aa4 36 ♖xc3 ♖xd4+ 37 ♔e3 ♖f4! 38 ♖c2 ♖fe4+ 39 ♔d2 ♖ad4+ 40 ♔c3 ♖c4+ 41 ♔d3 ♖xc2 42 ♔xc2 ♖e2+ 43 ♔d3 ♖xf2 44 g4 ♖f3+ 45 ♔d4 ♖xh3 46 ♖a1 ♖g3 47 ♔xd5 ♖xg4 48 ♔e5 f6+!

Avoiding 48...a5? 49 ♔f5!.

49 ♔e6 ♖e4+ 0-1

On board 6 Romain Edouard took his score for the season to an excellent 9½/11, with a win against another tough 2600+ opponent, Viktor Erdos. Despite strong defence, Romain retained an advantage into the endgame, which he converted with seemingly effortless ease.

Notes by Romain Edouard

R.Edouard-V.Erdos
Guildford vs Manx Liberty

43 ♔h3!

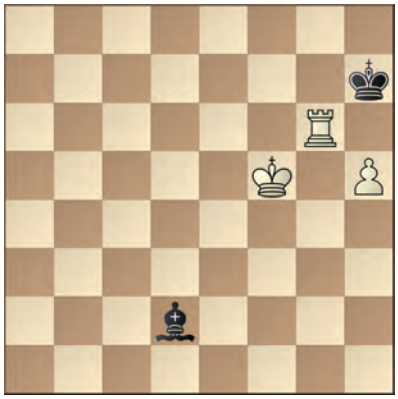
43 ♔g3? ♗f8 44 ♖f3? ♗xc5 45 ♖c3??, as in the game, would fail to 45...♗xd4!, which is winning for Black – that's why the white king should be on h3.

43...♗f8 44 ♖f3! ♗xc5 45 ♖c3 ♗xd4 46 ♖xc7 ♗xb2 46...♔g7 is hopeless: 47 b3 ♗xe5 48 ♖c5 and wins.

47 ♖xf7 a4 48 ♖a7 ♗xe5 49 g4 ♗b2 50 g5 a3 51 gxh6

51 g6 should also win, but I decided to go for a theoretical ending which I knew was winning for White.

51...♗c1 52 h7 a2 53 ♖xa2 ♔xh7 54 ♖e2 ♔g7 55 ♖xe6 ♗d2 56 ♔g4 ♗c1 57 ♔f5 ♗d2 58 ♖g6+ ♔h7



59 h6!

The winning plan requires White to first give up his remaining pawn, while keeping the black king confined.

59...♗c1 60 ♖g7+! ♔xh6 61 ♖g6+! ♔h7

61...♔h5 62 ♖g1 also wins.

62 ♔f6! ♗e3 63 ♔f7

With the h-pawn gone, White can now combine threats of mate and against the bishop.

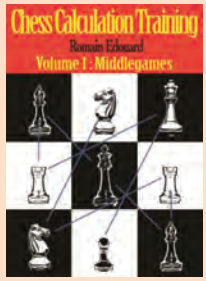
63 ..♗a7 64 ♖a6 ♗b8 65 ♖a8 ♗c7 66 ♖c8 ♗f4 67 ♖c4 ♗g5

Allowing the prettier finish. After 67...♗g3 68 ♖c3 the white rook can finally get to the h-file.

68 ♖c3! 1-0

Now the bishop blocks the black king's escape route.

If you want to know how to emulate Romain's endgame play, buy his books on calculation training!



Get all three volumes of *Chess Calculation Training* by Romain Edouard for the special price of just £60 (RRP £73.85)

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Aryan Tari defended well to draw with Hou Yifan, but Manx's genial captain Dietmar Kolbus eventually lost to Jorden Van Foreest after a sharp fight. Four wins and four draws gave us a comfortable 6-2 win.

So in the end, as Barden's recent column put it, "There were no surprises". Guildford I's average rating of 2672 against Manx was in fact our highest by a small margin over the 2013/14 season, when our titanic battle with Wood Green saw both teams averaging around 2650. Manx Liberty could increase their average significantly next year, so there may well be another 2650+ clash next May – assuming, of course, that this time both teams overcome the many obstacles on the way.

The stalwarts of Division One all seem to be getting stronger, and Division Two is also more competitive. We hope for more progress next season towards GM and IM titles by Matthew Wadsworth, Alex Golding, Harry Grieve and Viktor Stoyanov, and we will have another European Champion in the third team line-up, namely 11-year-old Jessica Mellor.

Thank you to Jonathan Rogers of Barbican 4NCL for the pairing that gave Matthew Wadsworth his chance of a GM norm, and to Mark Hebden for his generosity in helping Jess Mellor's coach, Adam Taylor, to his IM norm! Finally, I would like to thank all Guildford's opponents in Divisions One and Two for their good team spirit and sportsmanship, exemplified by Dietmar Kolbus and colleagues' warm congratulations after our victory – with a warning that Manx Liberty will return stronger next year!

An Elite Test

What's it like to be tasked with neutralising a dangerous 2700+ player with the black pieces? Matthew Sadler explains how he fared against Richard Rapport

Preparing for Richard Rapport was a lovely stroll through the byways of offbeat openings. Well, perhaps stroll is the wrong word – it felt rather like a marathon at times with the bewildering array of sidelines that Rapport plays (with great success). However, it was a very welcome change from the normal last-minute, main-line memorisation effort.

In principle, board one of the title decider was Manx Liberty's best prospect for a victory, with a clear rating difference and the white pieces. The main point in my favour was that as a working man, I should be in better shape for a morning start than a professional chess player! I'd noticed that Rapport had won an interesting game in the Bundesliga against Erwin L'Ami after 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♗g4, which I had also played as Black against Keith Arkell the previous day, so I thought it safer to switch to a different line.

R.Rapport-M.Sadler
Manx Liberty vs Guildford
Reti Opening

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♗g2 c5 4 0-0 e6

Avoiding the transposition back into the Catalan that occurs after 4...♘c6 5 d4. After 4...e6 5 d4 Black can play an aggressive plan with which I was successful against Ravi Haria a few 4NCL seasons back.

5 c4

After 5 d4 cxd4 6 ♘xd4 e5 7 ♘b3 ♗e6 8 ♘c3 ♗e7 9 e3 ♕d7 10 f4 e4 11 ♘d4 ♗g4 12 ♕d2 ♘c6 13 ♘ce2 h5 14 c4 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4 h4 I was having lots of fun in Haria-Sadler, 4NCL 2016.

5...d4 6 e3 ♘c6 7 exd4 cxd4 8 d3 ♗d6

We have reached a Modern Benoni structure with reversed colours.

In principle, White may claim two extra tempi in comparison to normal black lines: firstly, the advantage of moving first; secondly, the future tempo that Black will spend playing the natural ...e6-e5 (White normally plays this move in one go).

Considering how active the Modern Benoni is supposed to be, you would think that White would have excellent chances for a rapid attack. Black's position is fairly safe, however, precisely due to his restrained central structure. Without the need to sustain a pawn on e5 against white pressure along the half-open e-file, Black's pieces have more freedom to hold back any expansion by White on the queenside.

The one thing Black does have to ensure is that he keeps control of the e5-square, here achieved with 8...♗d6. If White is allowed to play ♖e1 and ♘e5 then exchange off the knight on c6, Black can experience difficulties covering his centre and queenside. For example, take the following classic Botvinnik game. You can argue about some of the specific decisions, but the thrust of the game is clear:

8...♗e7 9 ♘a3 0-0 10 ♘c2 a5 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 b3 ♗f8 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 ♖xe5 ♘d7 15 ♖b5 ♘c5 16 ♗a3 ♕c7 17 ♘xd4 ♖b8 18 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 19 ♘b5 ♕b6 20 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 21 d4 ♕e7 22 c5 ♖d8 23 ♕e1 b6 24 ♕e5 ♗a6 25 ♘d6 ♕c7 26 f4 ♖d7 27 ♖e1 g6 28 h4 h5 29 g4 hxg4 30 h5 (typical Botvinnik strategy: establish a grip on the centre and then play with great power on one wing) 30...bxc5 31 dxc5 ♖b5 32 ♘xb5 ♕xe5 33 fxe5 ♗xb5 34 hxg6 fxg6 35 c6 ♖d2 and 1-0 in Botvinnik-Buslaev, Moscow 1963.

9 ♘bd2

9 ♗g5 and 9 ♘a3 have been most common recently, but Rapport goes his own way.

9...0-0 10 ♘g5

A typical Benoni move, aiming for the establishment of a knight on the central e4-square. Having played through quite a few games of Rapport's, I was also well aware of the likelihood of his f-, g- and h-pawns being thrown at me quite quickly. I came up with a configuration of pieces I quite liked that gave me both active possibilities on the queenside while boosting my defensive resources on the kingside.

10...♗d7

A multipurpose move that:

i. Develops my last queenside piece – the basics should never be forgotten!

ii. Intends ...♖b8 and ...b5 to put pressure on White's queenside, especially if the knight on d2 moves towards the kingside.

iii. Eyes the manoeuvre ...♘e7 and ...♗c6 to challenge the long diagonal and exchange off the light-squared bishops.

Not only does Matthew Sadler remain very busy on the promotion front for his and Natasha Regan's best-selling book, as we'll discover next month, but he was able to neutralise Rapport.

Going ...♘e7 is particularly tempting once White plays f2-f4 as the knight can move to f5, targeting the weakened e3-square. It's also nice to be flexible when the opponent is working hard to create something new at the board: the more plans he has to consider, the more time he is likely to burn.

11 f4 h6

11...♘e7 seriously tempted me (I like trying to be as fast as possible), but unfortunately I didn't quite believe in my compensation after 12 ♗xb7 ♖b8 or 12...♘f5. Instead, I decided now was a good time to chase back the knight after White has blocked the c1-h6 diagonal, so he cannot target h6 with queen and bishop, and before Rapport started pushing his kingside pawns.

12 ♘ge4

12 ♘h3 was the move I expected and one that Rapport spent a great deal of time on. After the game, he was dissatisfied with 12...♖b8 13 g4 ♘e7 14 g5 ♘h7 15 ♘e4 ♗c6 followed by ...♘f5. All the same, it leads to an unbalanced, unusual position which would have fitted White's goals for the opening fairly well. The game continuation leads to a more standard type of position.

12...♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♗e7 14 ♖e1

A slightly odd move, but actually a little test. White would prefer to meet ...f5 with ♘d2-f3, redeploying the knight to a pleasant square, and thus delays developing the bishop to d2 for now. However, Black has many moves at his disposal and does not need to play ...f5 immediately.

Instead, 14 g4 f5 15 gxf5 exf5 and then 16 ♘d2, 16 ♘g3 or 16 ♘g5 led to some scenarios I turned over in my head for quite some time. I was trying to think of parallels and related examples from my experience, such as a game I'd played against Hjartarson in Malmo in 1995. In the future, White may think of doubling up on the newly-opened g-file. Facing a player who liked to attack at the slightest provocation, I was keen to reassure myself as to whether White would have any hope of creating dangerous play in the future.

Walking around waiting for my opponent to move, something *AlphaZero* likes popped into my head. *AlphaZero* has a schematic way of building up attacks, trying to combine a diagonal (preferably with opposite-coloured bishops so that the diagonal cannot be challenged), and file pointing at the opponent's king, optionally with a knight moving in close to the opponent's king. It seemed to me that one of those parameters, the diagonal, would be difficult to achieve unless I was careless, so at the very least, White's attack should not develop too quickly into something unstoppable. As it turned out, my opponent was not convinced of White's chances either and decided to keep all the options in the position open.

14...a5

Once launched on the *AlphaZero* train of thought, I felt I had to continue. Black is aiming to use the rook's pawn to create a few holes on the queenside: so ...a5-a4-a3, followed by the occupation of b4 and a subsequent ...b5 to open the queenside.

15 ♗d2 f5

Now Black plays ...f5 as the knight is forced to the inferior f2-square. White can transfer it to f3, but it will take a number of moves (♔h1 and ♘h3-g1-f3).

16 ♘f2 a4

More loosening than I realised. I was planning to strengthen my piece structure with ...♗c5, ...b6 and ...♕c/e7-d6 in the medium term, but I thought it would be sensible to play the queenside expansion first and leave my pieces on the kingside until I was sure which plan White was going to adopt. However, I'd missed the nice piece configuration that White now adopted.

17 ♖b1 ♗d6

Allowing ...♕e7 to hold back the white b-pawn if necessary (18 b4 axb3 19 axb3 ♕e7), and eyeing the f4-pawn to dissuade White from playing g3-g4.

18 ♖e2

A creative idea, preparing ♕e1 to support b2-b4 and threaten a future exchange sacrifice on e6. I had played pretty quickly until now, but I started to catch up on the clock as I tried to fathom out what my response should be.

18...♕c7

I decided that I could not stop the push of the b-pawn in the long run, so I chose to meet White's queenside play with central activity. 18...♕c7 prepares ...e5 before or after ...♖a/fe8. It looked pretty strong to me and Richard was also not keen to test it out.

19 ♖c1

If 19 ♕e1 ♖ae8 (19...e5 is also possible immediately; 19...♖fe8 20 b3 axb3 21 axb3 e5 appealed to me too, maintaining a rook on the newly-opened a-file) 20 b4 axb3 21 axb3 e5 with the idea of 22 ♘h3 e4 or 22 b4 exf4 23 c5 fxg3.

19...b6

After this move, my position felt solid again.

20 b4 axb3 21 axb3 ♖a2 22 ♖b1

Black is no longer able to stop b3-b4 from White, but he has the a-file in return.

22...♖fa8

Instead, 22...♗b4 (and not 22...♘b4? 23 ♗xb4 ♖xe2 24 ♗xd6) 23 ♗xb4 (23 ♗xc6 ♖xd2 24 ♖xd2 ♗xc6 felt like very reasonable compensation) 23...♘xb4 24 ♖xa2 ♘xa2 25 ♖a1 ♘b4 26 ♕e2 annoyed me a little. I didn't like losing control of the a-file and I wasn't completely sure how stable my knight on b4 would be.

23 b4 ♖8a4 24 ♗e1

A series of tactics start which cost both players quite a bit of time to work out.

24...♔h7

The b4-pawn is not hanging – somehow I didn't quite believe it and I ended up double-checking this a little more than I needed to – so I decided to get my king safe away from the checks and renew the threat.

Hungarian star Richard Rapport was drafted in by Manx Liberty for the final 4NCL weekend. He ground down Matthew Turner, survived against Jon Speelman, and was held by Matthew Sadler.

I was certainly right to avoid all of 24...♘xb4? 25 ♗xb4 ♖xe2 26 ♗xd6, 24...♗xb4? 25 ♖xa2 and 24...♖xe2 25 ♕xa4 ♘xb4? 26 ♕a8+ followed by ♗xb4 which wins a piece.

25 ♖xa2 ♖xa2 26 ♕b3 ♕a7

27 ♖c1 ½-½

Accompanied by a draw offer. It was quite well-timed since my last move 26...♕a7 had been accompanied by some frenetic calculation.

I thought 27 c5 ♖a3 28 ♕c4 bxc5 29 bxc5 ♗f8 was probably quite OK for Black and could be used as my reserve line (29...♗xc5 30 ♖b5 looked awkward to me, though my engine disagrees: 30...♖a1 31 ♔f1 ♗b4 32 ♖xb4 ♘xb4 33 ♕xb4 ♖c1 followed by ...♕a1 and it seems to feel that White will not be able to unravel), but it felt as if I was giving White a feeling of progress. For that reason, I focused more on 27...bxc5 28 ♗xc6 ♖a3 (not 28...♗xc6 29 ♕xe6 followed by ♕xf5+ and ♘e4 to block the a8-h1 diagonal where necessary) 29 ♕xa3 (29 ♕c4 ♗xc6 30 ♕xe6 ♕e7 looked good for Black: ...♖a3 has taken the rook off an attacked square with tempo, which gives Black the option of 31 ♕xf5+ g6) 29...♕xa3 30 ♗xd7 ♕a2 (a very important move, attacking the rook on b1 and covering e6) 31 ♖c1 cxb4 32 ♖c6.

I would normally have simply trusted myself that such lines were good for Black, but a large dollop of experience playing training games against *Stockfish* has given me a healthy suspicion of positions where my opponent is munching my pieces while I'm queening. I wasn't sure about 32...b3 33 ♖xd6 (33 ♗xe6 ♕e2 is similar to 32...♕e2, below) 33...b2 34 ♖b6 (if 34 ♗xe6 ♕a1 35 ♗xf5+ ♔g8) 34...b1♕ 35 ♖xb1 ♕xb1 36 ♔f1 during the game. I assumed Black should be just fine due to White's passive minor pieces and indeed my engine gives Black a big advantage. There's also 32...♕e2 33 ♗xb4 (after 33 ♖xd6 ♕xe1+ 34 ♔g2 b3 35 ♗xe6 b2 36 ♗xf5+ ♔g8 37 ♖b6 b1♕ 38 ♖xb1 ♕xb1 there can only be one winner) 33...♗xb4 34 ♖xe6 ♕b2 with the important point that 35 ♗e8, threatening ♗g6+ and ♖e8+, can be met by 35...g5.

After 27 ♖c1, both players had around 10 minutes left for the remaining 13 moves and, looking at the other boards, I felt that Guildford was nicely on the way to victory, so a draw felt like mission accomplished. Objectively however, 27 ♖c1 was not a great move: 27...♕a3 or 27...♕a4 should be a pleasant edge for Black.

The 4NCL Round-Up

Guildford's only defeat, the relegation battle and some fine chess as the season ended

As we have just seen, Guildford once again dominated the 4NCL and unsurprisingly many of their players racked up huge scores. Nick Pert finished with 10/11, while Jean-Pierre le Roux headed up the individual big-hitting table until a final round defeat to James Adair saw him finish on a mere 9½/11. We should also mention Luke McShane's highly impressive 6½/7, as well as the 4/5 and 6/8 scored respectively by Michael Adams and Gawain Jones.

For the new force on the block, Manx Liberty, Romanian Grandmasters Mircea-Emilian Parligras and Constantin Lupulescu top-scored with 7/9 and 6½/9 respectively, while David Howell turned in another decent display on top board for third-placed Cheddleton, finishing with 8/11. However, the best performance in the whole of Division One undoubtedly went to Jonathan Hawkins, who reminded everyone of his great talent as he racked up 10/11 on board 2 for Cheddleton which equated to a 2770 performance. The acclaimed coach and author of *Amateur to IM* also inflicted on Guildford I their only individual defeat of the season.

J.Hawkins-L.Fressinet
Cheddleton vs Guildford
Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♕c2 ♗d6 7 ♗d3 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 b5 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♖d1 ♕c7 12 ♗d2

Modest development, but we are deep in theory and Hawkins is in no rush to advance his e-pawn. After 12...♖fe8 13 ♖ac1 a6 White might well, however, and 14 e4 e5 15 ♘d5! ♕d8 (15...♘xd5 16 exd5 exd4 17 dxc6 ♖xe2 18 cxb7 ♕xb7 19 ♘xd4 ♖ee8 20 ♕c6 sees White continuing to press, but Black should be able to hold) 16 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17 ♗c3 gave him an edge in Bluebaum-Korobov, Bundesliga 2019.

12...e5 13 ♖ac1 a6 14 b4!?

This fits in well with the development of the bishop to d2. Clamping down on the liberating ...c5 break makes a lot of sense, although so too does 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘g5! followed by bringing a knight to e4.

14...♖fe8

Of course, 14...♗xb4? 15 ♘xb5 axb5 16 ♗xb4 would merely significantly increase White's grip on the position.

15 ♗d3

Activating and preventing 15...e4, but now 15...exd4!? 16 exd4 h6 followed by ...♘b6 would have been rock-solid for Black, who should be OK despite that imprisoned bishop on b7.

15...h6 16 ♘e4

Forcing the pace, rather than waiting with, say, 16 a3 ♖ad8 17 h3 when the position would have remained roughly balanced.

16...♘xe4 17 ♗xe4 exd4 18 ♘xd4!?

Gambitting h2, rather than 18 ♗xc6 when 18...d3! (18...dxe3 19 ♗xe3 ♖ac8 should just be a draw) 19 ♕c3 ♗xb4 20 ♕xb4 ♗xc6 21 ♘d4 ♘e5 might even be slightly annoying for White. It wasn't too late for 18 exd4 though, but after 18...♘f6 19 ♗xc6 (19 ♗d3 c5! liberates Black's bishop and feels dangerous for White) 19...♖ac8 20 d5! ♘xd5 21 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 22 ♕b3 ♖ed8 only Black, if anyone, should be able to exert nominal pressure.

18...♘e5?

The first new move of the game, and a major error. Previously, 18...♖ac8 19 ♗xc6 (19 ♗h7+!? ♔h8 20 ♗f5 ♗xh2+ 21 ♔f1 ♗e5 22 ♘b3 offers White reasonable positional compensation for a pawn) 19...♗xh2+ 20 ♔h1 ♕e5 21 ♕d3? ♖xc6! 22 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 23 ♖xc6 ♕h5 24 ♖dc1 ♘e5 25 ♕e4 f5 26 ♕d5+ ♔h7 had left White in deep trouble in Pavlicek-Meissner, correspondence 2010. If Black was content to play solidly for a draw, he might, though, have gone in for 18...♗xh2+ 19 ♔h1 ♗d6 20 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 21 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 22 ♖xc6 ♗f8, which would surely have been completely OK for him.

19 ♘f5 ♗f8 20 ♗c3

Fressinet had no doubt seen this move in advance, but had presumably failed to realise that even after competing for control of the long dark-square diagonal, Black will remain under heavy pressure.

20...g6

20...c5? 21 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 22 bxc5 and if 22...♗xc5? 23 ♘xg7! ♔xg7 24 ♕f5 would not have been wise, and even after 20...a5 21 a3! White remains in full control of the position.

21 ♘g3 ♕e7

Possibly only now did Fressinet spot that 21...♗g7 22 f4 ♘c4 would have failed to 23 ♗xg6!, and if 23...fxg6 24 ♕xg6 ♕f7 25 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 26 ♖d7+ or 23...♘xe3 24 ♗h7+ ♔h8 25 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 26 ♘h5+ ♔f8 27 ♕c3 when Black won't survive. Notably so bad already is Black's position that the engines want to ditch a pawn with 21...f5!?, hoping to grovel on after 22 ♗xe5 (22 f4 is also pretty promising) 22...♖xe5 23 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 24 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 25 ♖xc6 ♔f7.

22 h3

Preparation for a timely f2-f4, but amazingly there was a sacrificial blow: 22 ♗xg6!! ♘xg6 (22...fxg6 23 f4 ♘c4 24 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 25 ♘f5 is easier to grasp) 23 ♘h5 when Black is quite lost due to the threats down the long diagonal, and if 23...♘e5 24 ♕f5 ♗g7 25 ♘xg7 ♔xg7 26 f4.

22...♗g7 23 ♕b3

Even here Black remains under pressure, on the kingside and due to his problematic piece on b7.

23...♔h8 24 ♘e2 ♖ac8 25 ♗d4

Rerouting the knight to e2 made sense, but only if White intended to follow up with 25 ♘f4! when he would have maintained a clear advantage: for example, 25...♖cd8 (not 25...♘c4? 26 ♗xg6!, and 25...c5 26 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 remains tactically flawed, as shown by 27 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 28 bxc5 ♖exc5 29 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 30 ♘xg6+! fxg6? 31 ♖d8+) 26 ♗xe5!? (forcing the pace; White might also wait with, say, 26 a3) 26...♖xd1+ 27 ♖xd1 ♗xe5 28 ♘d3 ♕f6 29 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 30 ♕c3! and White's far superior light-squared bishop continues to make its presence felt.

25...♘c4 26 ♗xg7+

The knight on c4 is a thorn in White's side and one not easily dealt with by 26 ♗d3, in view of 26...♗xd4 27 ♘xd4 c5! when Black suddenly liberates his forces (27...♘xe3 28 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 29 ♔h2 ♕xd4 30 ♕xf7 isn't so effective). White didn't, however, have to trade bishops and 26 ♕c3!? ♗xd4 27 ♖xd4 ahead of ♗d3 would have preserved a

The star performer in this season's 4NCL, Jonathan Hawkins, who made a whopping 10/11.

definite and healthy plus.

26...♔xg7 27 ♗d3 ♘e5 28 ♕c3

Hawkins has drifted a little, but even so retains the more pleasant position due to his greater freedom of movement. A radical alternative was 28 ♗e4 ♘c4 29 ♗f3!? c5 30 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 31 a4!, which would also have retained a definite degree of pressure.

28...♔g8 29 ♘f4 c5!?

At last Fressinet is able to carry out his ideal advance, although he didn't have to break and might have continue to hunker down with 29...♖ed8 30 ♗e4 ♘c4.

30 bxc5 ♘d7?

Hawkins might have drifted a little, but has done well to ensure that Black was never able to effect ...c5 when it completely equalises. Here he has prepared a little tactic to prevent Black from easily regaining the pawn on c5. As such, 30...♖ed8! was essential when Black wouldn't have been doing too badly, since it's far from trivial to improve the white pieces. 31 ♕b4 ♖d7 32 a4 is the most direct plan and after 32...♘xd3 33 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 34 ♘xd3 ♕e4 35 ♕xe4 ♗xe4 36 ♘b2 White remains a pawn to the good, but Black is certainly not without his chances to hold.

31 ♗xg6!

Boom! Now 31...fxg6 32 ♘xg6 pretty much forces the hopeless 32...♕g7 33 ♖xd7! ♕xc3 (33...♕xd7 34 ♕h8+ ♔f7 35 ♕h7+ ♔e6 36 ♘f4+ wins the queen) 34 ♖xc3 and, like the game, 31...♘xc5 32 ♗h5 ♘e6 33 ♕e5 leaves White a pawn up and in full control.

31...♖xc5 32 ♕b3 ♖xc1 33 ♖xc1 ♘e5 34 ♗b1 ♕g5

Hoping to trouble the white monarch as well as cover the gaping holes around his own king, but that knight on f4 is a monster and White will be able to invade down the c-file.

35 ♔f1 ♗a8 36 ♖c5 ♕f6 37 ♕c3 ♕d6 38 ♗c2 ♗b7 39 ♘h5 ♔f8 40 ♔g1!

Good prophylaxis as White continues to move in for the kill by preparing f2-f4 and not allowing 40 f4? ♘c4.

40...♘c4

This doesn't help matters, but in any case the game had gone for Fressinet with the engine's suggestion of 40...b4 41 ♕xb4 ♘d7 42 ♖c4 ♕xb4 43 ♖xb4 merely resulting in a hopeless endgame.

41 ♕g7+ ♔e7 42 ♖f5 ♖f8 43 ♘f4

All game White has enjoyed the superior coordination and never more so than now.

43...♔e8 44 ♖f6 ♕e5 45 ♘g6! 1-0

With Manx creating a big three at the head of Division One, best of the rest was fourth place with that award once again going to White Rose. The Yorkshire side did defeat Manx, but were also a little fortunate to finish fourth – the young guns of Wood Green would have done so had they drawn their final round match with Cheddleton, not lost 4½-3½ after a pressing Justin Tan tragically overstepped the time limit against Jonathan Hawkins on move 71.

Wood Green captain Lawrence Cooper, once the highly successful force behind Midland Monarchs back in the nineties when they won three 4NCL titles, could at least enjoy Adam Taylor's IM norm, while White Rose supremo Paul Townsend was able to celebrate another decent season for his team. Two of the stars of the White Rose team are Daniel Alsina Leal and James Adair, both of whom won instructive encounters during the May weekend.

J.Adair-K.Arkell
White Rose vs Cheddleton
Scandinavian Defence

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♘f6 3 d4 ♘xd5 4 c4 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 g6 6 g3 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 0-0 8 0-0 c6 9 ♘c3 ♗g4 10 ♗e3 ♘bd7 11 ♕b3 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 ♕b6

White has obtained an ideal set-up and already Black's position is unpleasant, since he can't easily liberate his pieces. 12...♕c7 13 ♖fe1 e5 is the direct attempt to do so, but after 14 d5 followed by, say, 14...♖fe8 15 ♖ad1 e4 16 ♗g2 White retains a clear plus.

13 ♕a3 ♕d8 14 ♖fd1 ♖e8 15 b4!?

15 ♗f4 was, of course, possible, but Adair sees no reason not to exploit the position of his bishops by advancing on the queenside.

15...♘b6

Black also comes under significant pressure after 15...e5 16 dxe5 ♖xe5 17 ♗d4 ♖e8 18 b5.

16 ♕b3 ♕d7 17 ♔g2

Calmly improving his pieces and avoiding any notion of ...♕h3 followed by ...♘g4, ahead of crashing through in the centre.

17...♕e6

18 d5! cxd5 19 c5!

19 ♘xd5 ♘bxd5 20 cxd5 ♕d7 21 ♖ac1 would have maintained a pleasant edge, but Adair rightly plays for more having worked out that Black's threats down the long diagonal are not actually so serious.

19...♘e4 20 ♘xd5

20 ♗xe4 ♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♕xe4+ 22 f3 ♕c4 was the tactical point behind Black's last, although even here 23 ♕b3 ♕xb3 24 axb3 ♘d7 25 b5 would have left him under

heavy pressure.

20...♘xd5 21 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 22 ♖xd5 ♗xa1 23 ♗xe4 This is the position which Adair had to correctly assess before going 19 c5. White is a whole exchange in arrears, but ♖d7 is threatened and his bishops and queenside majority mean that he is clearly better.

23...f5 24 ♗f3 ♖ad8

24...b6 might have been an option had it not been for 25 ♖d1, and if 25...♗c3 26 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 27 b5! bxc5 28 ♗xc5 with excellent winning chances for White.

25 ♖xd8 Pocketing the b-pawn, but the calm 25 b5 could have been even stronger.

25...♖xd8 26 ♗xb7

26...♗d4?

It might appear that Keith Arkell's only mistake in this game was to play a rather passive opening, but trading the bishops merely makes White's task easier. Watching from the adjacent board I expected him to try 26...♖d3! 27 b5 ♖xe3 28 fxe3 ♔f7, hoping for salvation with the opposite-coloured bishops. Whether this is enough to draw isn't obvious as after, say, 29 ♗d5+ e6 30 ♗b3 ♔e7 31 a4 ♗c3 32 b6 axb6 33 cxb6 White's queenside pawns and bishop are ideally placed. However, by aiming to blockade the pawns Black retains definite drawing chances, i.e. 33...♗a5 (33...♔d7 34 b7 ♔c7? 35 ♗xe6 ♔xb7 36 ♗g8 h6 37 ♗h7 ♗d2 38 ♔f3 g5 39 ♗xf5 is winning for White as his extra pawns are four files apart) 34 b7 ♗c7 35 a5 ♔d6 36 a6 ♗b8 followed by ...♔c5-b6. Breaking through on the kingside is not such an easy business for White and the hasty 37 h4 ♔c5 38 ♗xe6? ♔b5 39 ♗g8 h6 40 ♗h7 ♔xa6 41 ♗xg6 ♔xb7 42 ♗xf5 ♔c6 is certainly but a draw.

27 ♔f3 ♗xe3 28 ♔xe3 ♖d1 29 b5

Black's rook might be actively placed, but he cannot halt White's rampant majority.

29...♔f7 30 a4 ♔e6 Alternatively, 30...♖a1 31 c6 ♖c1 32 a5 ♔e6 33 b6 with an easy win. **31 a5 ♖e1+ 32 ♔d2 ♖f1 33 ♔e2 ♖c1 34 b6!**

The decisive breakthrough. The game is up.

34...♖xc5 35 bxa7 ♖xa5 36 a8♕ ♖xa8 37 ♗xa8 ♔f6 38 ♔d3 g5 39 ♔d4 g4 40 ♗c6 e6 41 ♗b5 h5 42 ♗e8 h4 43 gxh4 1-0

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D.Alsina Leal-D.Gormally

White Rose vs Blackthorne Russia

Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 ♗e7 8 ♕f3 ♕c7 9 0-0-0 ♘bd7 10 g4 b5 11 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 12 g5 ♘d7 13 f5 ♗xg5+

Black's most solid choice rather than allow White his ideal initiative with 13...♘c5 14 f6 gxf6 15 gxf6 ♗f8 16 ♖g1 or head for the trendy waters of 13...0-0!?.

14 ♔b1 ♘e5 15 ♕h5 ♕e7 16 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 17 fxe6 g6 18 exf7+ ♔xf7 19 ♕h3 ♔g7 20 ♘d5 ♕d8 21 ♗e2

Black is very solid, but I've always found this line to be a little unpleasant for him, a view which the game has done nothing to change and neither would have 21 ♕c3!? ♖c8 22 ♕a3 ♖c6 23 ♗e2, which maintains a pleasant edge for White.

21...♖f8 22 ♖hf1 ♖a7!

Gormally unravels well, looking to the f-file for simplification and even some counterplay.

23 ♖xf8 ♕xf8 24 ♖f1 ♖f7 25 ♖xf7+ ♕xf7 26 ♕g3

Thus far White's play might appear rather simplistic. Moreover, both sides have a good outpost for their knights and the bishops are of opposite colours, but the position is far from a dead draw due to the potential weakness of the black queenside.

26...♗h6?

The right diagonal if Black wants to hassle the white king, but it turns out that the bishop actually does little here. 26...h6 27 h4 ♗d8 28 h5 g5 may have felt unpleasant, but should be tenable for Black, since he can obtain counterplay with a timely ...g4. There was also 26...♗f6!?, angling for ...♘c4 when Black should be able to draw.

27 ♕g1?

27 h4! ♕a7 28 c3 was the correct way to secure a clear advantage.

27...♕b7?

This might appear solid, but Alsina Leal will now demonstrate that the defence is most uncomfortable. As such, 27...♘f3 was necessary, and if 28 ♕g2 (28 ♗xf3 ♕xf3 29 ♕a7+ ♔g8 30 ♕a8+ ♗f8 is nothing for Black to fear with his queen so active) 28...♘d2+ 29 ♔a1 ♗f4! when Black seems to have enough counterplay.

28 h4! ♔h8 29 a3

White is fully back on track. His queen is more active than its counterpart and he can exert pressure on the kingside with the h-pawn.

29...♗g7 30 h5! gxh5 31 ♕g5

31 ♗xh5 ♘c4 32 ♕g5! was a better way of going about things, when 32...♕d7 33 c3 ♘e5 still leaves Black solidly placed, but also under pressure right across the board (White might even regroup with 34 ♕g1 and ♕b6).

31...♕f7 32 ♔a2?

Even after 32 ♕xh5! ♕xh5 33 ♗xh5 ♘d7! 34 b4 ♘f6 35 ♘xf6 ♗xf6 36 ♔a2 ♔g7 37 ♔b3 White is for choice due to his more mobile pawns, although one would imagine that, with care, Black should be able

to hold.

32...h6?

Gormally continues to underestimate the danger. 32...♘g4! was correct, and if 33 ♗xg4 (or 33 ♕d8+ ♕f8 34 ♕b6 ♘f6 35 ♘xf6 ♕xf6 36 ♕b8+ ♕f8) 33...hxg4 34 ♕xg4 h5 when he would have secured sufficient counterplay to maintain the balance.

33 ♕xh5 ♕xh5

Black didn't have to consent to this exchange, but 33...♕f8 34 c3 ♕d8 35 ♕f5 would also have been most unpleasant for him (White can combine ideas of ♘b4 with those of ♗h5, targeting the black king).

34 ♗xh5

The h-pawn still isn't going anywhere and meanwhile Black's queenside pawns are vulnerable.

34...♘c4 35 c3 ♘d2?

Now White is too fast. As pointed out by Alsina Leal after the game, 35...♗e5 36 ♘c7 d5! had to be tried, when 37 ♘xd5 ♔g7 38 ♘b4 ♔f6 39 ♘xa6 ♔g5 40 ♗e8 ♘d6 41 ♗d7 h5 supplies some much-needed counterplay and might yet just about save the day for Black.

36 ♘c7 ♘xe4 37 ♘xa6 d5 38 ♗f3 ♘xc3+

Desperation, and desperation which becomes entirely understandable once you've considered the lines 38...♘d6 39 ♗xd5 h5 40 ♘c7 h4 41 ♗c6 and 38...♗e5 39 ♘b4 ♔g7 40 ♘xd5 ♘g3 41 ♔b3 ♗d6 42 a4 bxa4+ 43 ♔xa4 ♘f5 44 b4, both of which should be winning for White.

39 bxc3 ♗xc3 40 ♘c7 ♔g7 41 ♘xd5 ♗a5 42 ♗h5!

The bishop returns to its former outpost with some effect. Now Black can't even activate his king and White was able to win without needing to resort to bishop and knight against king. All game the Catalan Grandmaster has oozed class and unsurprisingly made no mistake from here on.

42...♗e1 43 ♔b3 ♗g3 44 ♘c3 ♗e1 45 ♘xb5 ♔f6 46 ♘d4 ♗f2 47 ♘f3 ♔e6 48 ♔c4 ♔d6 49 ♔b5 ♔c7 50 a4 ♗e3 51 ♘e5 ♗f2 52 ♘g4 ♗e1 53 ♘xh6 ♗d2 54 ♘f5 ♗e1 55 ♘d4 ♗d2 56 ♗f3 ♗e3 57 ♘c2 ♗b6 58 ♘b4 ♗a7 59 ♘d5+ ♔d6 60 ♘b6 1-0

An Anti-Climax

We mentioned in our May pages that after round 7, "The Demotion Pool [table did] not read so badly for those sides who joined it via Pool A, at least not yet." As readers will be all too aware, chess editors, like football pundits, should not make predictions, and that final clause turned out to be a saviour. Come the final weekend, none of Oxford, West is Best, North East England or Alba strengthened, in contrast to their rivals from Pool B – 3Cs, Wood Green Monarchs, Grantham Sharks and Celtic Tigers – who all at least fielded all their strongest regular players.

As well as improving their seeding system to balance the pools better, dare we suggest that the 4NCL could do well to consider a return to a 12-team all-play-all for the top flights, something which would likely make Division One that bit more competitive and quite possibly also reduce the number of dead-rubber matches?

Oxford were undoubtedly hit by exam clashes for their students, losing to 3Cs and the Sharks before serving a reminder that they are ever a dangerous side by upsetting Wood Green Monarchs 5½-2½. Unfortunately for Oxford that was a classic case of too late, too late, while elsewhere North East England and West is Best fought hard, but were generally outclassed.

The main surprise in the relegation places was that of Alba, especially as the Scottish side averaged over 2300 for the final rounds, but that didn't prevent them losing 6-2 to both the slightly lower-rated Monarchs and 3Cs, as well as 4½-3½ to the Tigers. Collectively Alba were a bit unlucky and their play likely too loose, as exemplified by even one of their key players, Clement Sreeves, who earlier in the season had outplayed James Adair.

C.Sreeves-K.Szczepkowska
Alba vs Celtic Tigers
King's Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♗c4 ♘e7 4 ♘c3 c6 5 d4 ♘g6 Surely too materialistic and one might have thought that Black's play had prepared the thematic central counter 5...d5.

6 ♘f3

6 ♕f3 or even 6 ♕h5!? would have forced any ...d5 break to be played as a pawn sacrifice and left White with good chances to emerge with the upper hand.

6...♗e7 7 ♕e2 d6 8 ♗d2 Officially a novelty, but preparing to go long is not illogical, if a little unusual in the King's Gambit.

8...b5?!

8...0-0 9 0-0-0 and only then 9...b5 would have been somewhat more prudent.

9 ♘xb5!

Sreeves takes up the challenge, having recognised that even after Black's next (and not 9...cxb5? 10 ♗d5), White will emerge with a strong centre in return for the piece.

9...d5 10 exd5 cxb5 11 ♗xb5+ ♔f8

12 d6?? Far too swashbuckling. It's hard to assess whether White has more than enough for the piece after 12 c4, but his clump of central pawns certainly should not be underestimated and neither should Black's jammed-up kingside.

12...♗xd6 13 ♕e4

The materialistic point behind his last, but there is a simple refutation, which unsurprisingly the Polish WGM and IM finds.

13...♕e7 14 ♘e5 ♗b7 0-1

2018-2019 4NCL Division 1 Relegation Pool

	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	3Cs	X	6-2	5½-2½	3½-4½	6-1½	3½-4½	5½-2½	6-2	36	**10**
2	Wood Green Monarchs	2-6	X	4½-3½	4½-3½	2½-5½	5-3	5½-2½	6-2	30	**10**
3	Grantham Sharks	2½-5½	3½-4½	X	4-4	6-2	5½-2½	4½-3½	5½-2½	31½	**9**
4	Celtic Tigers	4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4	X	3½-4½	4-4	4-3	4½-3½	28	**8**
5	Oxford	1½-6	5½-2½	2-6	4½-3½	X	4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4	25½	**7**
6	West is Best	4½-3½	3-5	2½-5½	4-4	3½-4½	X	4-4	3½-4½	25	**4**
7	North East England	2½-5½	2½-5½	3½-4½	3-4	4½-3½	4-4	X	4-4	24	**4**
8	Alba	2-6	2-6	2½-5½	3½-4½	4-4	4½-3½	4-4	X	22½	**4**

It's A Knockout!

The FIDE Grand Prix has had a makeover. Ian Nepomniachtchi triumphed in Moscow

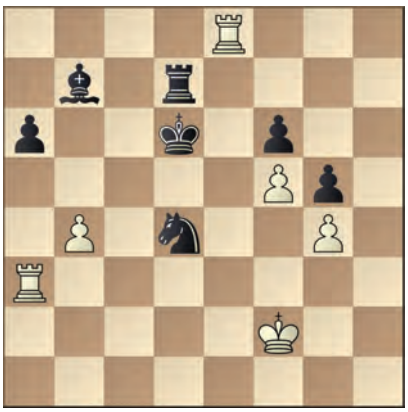
FIDE and World Chess staged the first event in their new Grand Prix cycle in Moscow. In recent years the Grand Prix format has often seemed rather dull, so kudos to World Chess for trialling something new: 16-player knockout events. It's too early to assess whether the format, which echoes the FIDE World Cup, will be a success, but Moscow was certainly somewhat more exciting than many of its all-play-all Grand Prix predecessors.

In last month's Editorial we got to enjoy Jan-Krzysztof Duda outplaying Wesley So ahead of making the possibly surprising choice to go with the Dragon in the return game. Duda even opted for the tricky Burnett variation (1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 g6 6 ♗e3 ♗g7 7 f3 0-0 8 ♕d2 ♘c6 9 ♗c4 ♗d7 10 0-0-0 ♘e5 11 ♗b3 ♖c8 12 ♔b1 ♘c4 13 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 14 g4 b5 15 b3 b4 16 bxc4 bxc3 17 ♕xc3 ♕c7), only to run into a technical masterclass from So, who went on to triumph in the ensuing rapid play-off.

The last-sixteen stage will be remembered not just for Duda, but also Daniil Dubov who won a fearless, Tal-like game against Anish Giri – one which you'll be able to try your hand at in Daniel King's *How Good is Your Chess?* later in these pages. Elsewhere Ian Nepomniachtchi ground down Levon Aronian ahead of holding firm in the return, whereas Radoslaw Wojtaszek was a fortunate winner as White.

Arguably the most exciting match was the dramatic semi-final between Radoslaw Wojtaszek and Ian Nepomniachtchi. The Polish GM may still be wondering how he failed to reach the final.

R.Wojtaszek-S.Mamedyarov
1st matchgame



White is resisting well, but after 55...♔c7 56 ♖d3 ♗c6 57 ♖f8 ♖d6 or 55...♖e7 56 ♖d8+ ♔e5 Black would have retained good winning chances. Mamedyarov, however, preferred to follow the endgame principle of activating the king.

55...♔d5? 56 ♖c3 ♗c6?

Now Black's knight gets into trouble, but 56...♔d6 57 ♔e3 ♘c6 58 ♖e6+ would also have left him in trouble, so by now he should have settled for a repetition with 56...♘c6 57 ♖d3+ ♘d4 58 ♖c3.

57 ♔e3 ♘b3

Suddenly 58 ♖c5+ is a huge threat and a piece also goes west after 57...♘b5? 58 ♖c5+ ♔d6 59 ♖e6+.

58 ♖e6!

Black was hoping to obtain plenty of counterplay with 58 ♖xb3 ♔c4, but now he loses a piece under much worse circumstances, after which Wojtaszek made no mistake.

58...♗b5 59 ♖xb3 ♔c4 60 ♖b1 ♔c3 61 ♖xf6 ♖d3+ 62 ♔e4 ♖d4+ 63 ♔e5 ♖xg4 64 ♖b6 ♗d3 65 ♖c6+ ♔d2 66 ♖b2+ ♔e3 67 f6 1-0

Alexander Grischuk and Peter Svidler won with White in Game 2 to also progress, while Wei Yi did so as Black after Dmitry Jakovenko badly lost control. The only match which was rather dull was Hikaru Nakamura against Teimour Radjabov: draws in 14 and 12 moves before the American speedster unsurprisingly proved too strong in the 25+10 play-off.

Of course, if both players are happy with a rapid play-off, two fairly quick draws makes good sense and the crowd certainly groaned when all the opening games in the quarter-finals were drawn, in between 20 and 31 moves. The returns were thankfully much more exciting, although only Wojtazek managed to win, eliminating Bundesliga team-mate Svidler in a sharp Benoni.

Come the quarter-final play-offs, Nakamura once again demonstrated his class, defeating World Rapid Champion Dubov as Black ahead of being able to offer a draw when an exchange up in the return. Grischuk outplayed So as White to face Nakamura in the semi-finals, while Nepomniachtchi also advanced after Wei Yi found his queen trapped mid-board.

Grischuk was always at least equal as Black in Game 1 of the semi-final, having sacrificed a pawn for a powerful bishop-pair, before displaying further deep preparation to eliminate Nakamura in the return.

A.Grischuk-H.Nakamura
2nd matchgame
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 g3 ♗e7 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♕c2 b5 8 a4 b4 9 ♘fd2!

An impressive handling of the opening, gambiting a pawn to open up the Catalan bishop and force Black to compromise his queenside.

9...c6 10 ♘xc4 ♕xd4 11 ♖d1 ♕c5 12 ♗e3 ♕h5 13 ♘bd2 ♘g4 14 ♘f3 ♘xe3 15 ♘xe3 a5 16 ♘d4!?

The novelty, improving over 16 ♘c4 ♗a6

17 ♘fe5 ♗xc4 18 ♘xc4 ♖a7 19 ♖ac1 ♕c5 20 ♕e4 ♖c7 21 ♘e5 ♕a7 22 ♘xc6 which had led to a draw in Ding Liren-Nakamura, Abidjan (blitz) 2019, due to the opposite-coloured bishops.

16...♗a6 17 ♖ac1 ♖c8 18 ♗f3 ♕g6 19 ♗e4 ♕h5 20 ♗f3 ♕g6 21 ♗e4 ♕h5 22 ♔g2 ♖a7 23 h4!

White's bishop is a monster and he now begins to seize space. All the while Black's position remains unpleasant: his queen being offside and knight stuck on b8.

23...g6 24 f4 ♕h6

Black might like to go 24...c5, but that is well met by 25 ♘b5, and if 25...♖d7 26 ♖xd7 ♘xd7 27 ♘c4 ♗d8? 28 ♕d1 ♘f6 29 ♗f3 ♕h6 30 ♘a7 or 25...♗xb5 26 axb5 c4 27 b6.

25 ♘b3

Targeting a5 as Black begins to drift.

25...♔h8?! 26 ♗d3 ♗b7?!

26...♗xd3 27 ♕xd3 ♖cc7 28 ♘c4 maintains White's bind, so maybe bringing the queen back with 26...♕f8 was best.

27 ♘c4 c5+ 28 ♗e4 ♗a6

28...♗xe4+ 29 ♕xe4 ♕f8 30 ♘bxa5 also keeps up the pressure.

29 ♘bxa5 ♕f8 30 ♗f3 ♖d8

Now Black is squeezed even more, so perhaps he should have tried 30...h5.

31 h5

White has regained his pawn and still dominates the board. 31 ♘e5 was also strong.

31...♗f6 32 ♖xd8 ♕xd8 33 ♖d1 ♖d7 34 ♖xd7 ♘xd7 35 h6!

Hemming in the king which now needed to try and flee with 35...♔g8, and not 35...♕f8? 36 ♕e4 ♕xh6? 37 ♕a8+.

35...♘b6? 36 ♘e5! ♗xe5 37 ♘c6

37...♘c4

Black's position is collapsing, as shown by 37...♕c7 38 fxe5 ♘d7 39 ♘xb4 and 37...♕f8 38 ♘xe5 ♔g8 39 a5 ♘d5 40 ♕a4. Nakamura gets the queens off, but only at the cost of a lost endgame.

38 ♘xd8 ♘e3+ 39 ♔f2 ♘xc2 40 ♘xf7+ ♔g8 41 ♘xe5 c4 42 ♗g4 ♘d4 43 ♔e1!

Involving the most important piece, the king, and now 43...c3 44 bxc3 bxc3 45 ♔d1 wins.

43...♔f8 44 ♔d1 ♔e7 45 e3 ♘b3 46 ♘c6+ ♔f6 47 ♘xb4 ♗b7 48 ♗e2 ♘a5 49 ♔d2 ♘b3+ 50 ♔c3 ♘c5 51 a5 ♘e4+ 52 ♔xc4 ♘xg3 53 ♗d3 g5 54 fxg5+ 1-0

After two fairly uneventful draws, Nepomniachtchi and Wojtaszek found themselves in a rapid play-off and one where the Russian was under heavy pressure in the first ahead of being even more fortunate to survive in the second.

I.Nepomniachtchi-R.Wojtaszek
4th matchgame (rapid)

In typical Sicilian fashion, Black's queenside counterplay has balanced White's hold on d5 and kingside play. Now 26 ♕d3 would have been wise, but Nepomniachtchi wrongly thought that he could force a draw.

26 ♗xh6? gxh6 27 ♕g4+ ♔f8 28 ♕h4 f6?

Defending along the second is logical, but 28...♕d8! 29 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 would have been even stronger. White is out of checks and faced with a plan of ...♗c7 followed by ...♕f6 or ...d5, or if 30 ♘h5? ♗xf5 31 exf5 ♕h4.

29 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 30 ♕g6+ ♔f8 31 ♕h5

A little cheeky, but even here Black is unable to avoid the perpetual.

31...♕f7 32 ♕h8+ ♕g8 33 ♕h6+ ♔f7 34 ♕h5+ ♔f8 35 ♕h6+ ♔f7 36 ♕h5+ ♔f8 37 ♕h6+ ½-½

That led to two 10+5 minute games, the first of which was drawn before Wojtaszek quickly lost his way in the second. And so it was to be an all-Russian final. Nepomniachtchi's Grünfeld Defence never came under any pressure before he was happy to quickly hoover the pieces as White to produce a twelfth day of play in the tournament. In the second play-off game Grischuk was quickly stranded with a knight on a5, that offside piece proving fatal as Nepomniachtchi crashed through in the centre.

The finalists' differing views on the format were notable. Unsurprisingly Grischuk commentated that "Knockout is the best for me", while Nepomniachtchi's views stood out:

"The whole system makes some harm over the quality of play because sometimes you want to take a less risky decision – so not take any extra risks – and play safely. And somehow you are missing the best continuations, which are connected with some serious play."

Nepomniachtchi pocketed 9 Grand Prix points in the race to qualify for the next Candidates, Grischuk seven, Wojtaszek five and Nakamura three. The Grand Prix series now moves on to Riga this month ahead of visiting Hamburg in November then Tel Aviv just before Christmas. Each of the 21 players play in three of the events (a wildcard will balance out the numbers in the final leg), with Pentala Harikrishna, David Navara, Veselin Topalov, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Yu Yangyi all set to play the remaining three events.

Last Sixteeen:
Daniil Dubov 1½-½ Anish Giri
Hikaru Nakamura 2½-1½ Teimour Radjabov
Wesley So 2½-1½ Jan-Krzysztof Duda
Alexander Grischuk 1½-½ Sergey Karjakin
Ian Nepomniachtchi 1½-½ Levon Aronian
Wei Yi 1½-½ Dmitry Jakovenko
Peter Svidler 1½-½ Nikita Vitiugov
Radoslaw Wojtaszek 1½-½ Shak Mamedyarov

Quarter-Finals:
Hikaru Nakamura 2½-1½ Daniil Dubov
Alexander Grischuk 2½-1½ Wesley So
Ian Nepomniachtchi 2½-1½ Wei Yi
Radoslaw Wojtaszek 1½-½ Peter Svidler

Semi-Finals:
Alexander Grischuk 1½-½ Hikaru Nakamura
Ian Nepomniachtchi 3½-2½ Radoslaw Wojtaszek

Final:
Ian Nepomniachtchi 2½-1½ Alexander Grischuk

Find the Winning Moves

24 puzzles to test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from many different recent events, not least the final 4NCL weekend of the season. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 54.

Warm-up Puzzles

(1) P.Neatherway-B.Kocan
Oxford 2019
White to Play

(2) A.Crombleholme-R.Taylor
English Over-65 Ch., Solihull 2019
White to Play

(3) N.Woltery-M.Burrows
Stevenage 2019
Black to Play

(4) K.Arakhamia-Grant-D.Kolbus
Edinburgh 2019
White to Play

(5) B.Amin-M.Vachier-Lagrave
Abidjan (rapid) 2019
Black to Play

(6) V.Anand-D.Navara
Gashimov Memorial, Shamkir 2019
Black to Play and Draw

Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 53

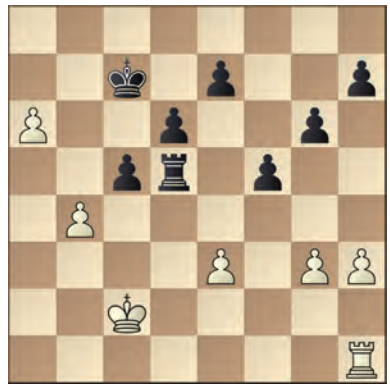
(7) J.Rudd-M.Wadsworth
Southend 2019
Black to Play

(8) S.Royal-J.Willow
Stevenage 2019
Black to Play

(9) D.Gibbs-I.Deswarte
English Over-50 Ch., Solihull 2019
White to Play

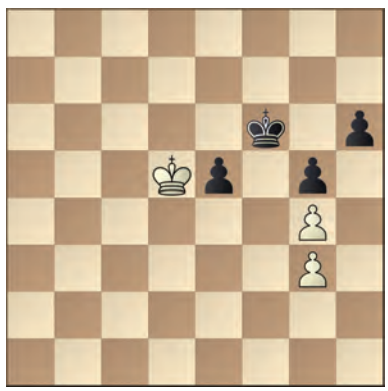
(10) M.Loeffler-J.Bounlom
Zurich 2019
White to Play

(11) H.Raja-V.Mikhalevski
Budapest 2019
Black to Play



(12) P.Kobryn-J.Rothwell
Bolton 2019
Black to Play

(13) P.Wells-J.Hawkins
4NCL, Telford 2019
Black to Play



(14) V.Miletic-M.Pobor
Montenegrin Ch., Podgorica 2019
White to Play and Draw

(15) T.Brown-T.Kett
Welsh Championship, Cardiff 2019
Black to Play

Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 53

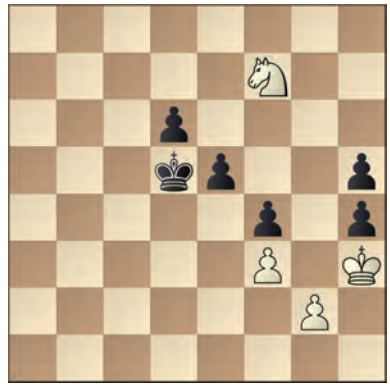
(16) C.Duncan-J.Camacho Collados
4NCL, Telford 2019
Black to Play

(17) R.Britton-A.Verma
Stevenage 2019
Black to Play

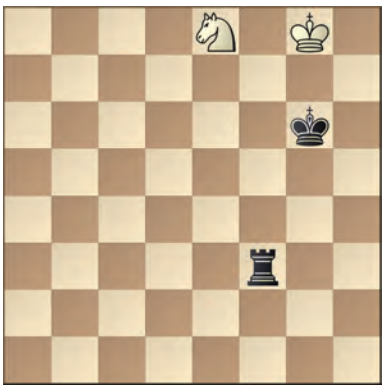
(18) D.Gormally-M.Adams
4NCL, Telford 2019
Black to Play

(19) M.Vachier-Lagrave-V.Keymer
GRENKE Chess Classic, Baden-Baden 2019
Black to Play and Draw

(20) M.Vachier Lagrave-I.Nepomniachtchi
Abidjan (rapid) 2019
White to Play



(21) A.Taylor-M.Hebden
4NCL, Telford 2019
Black to Play and Draw



(22) V.Topalov-Ding Liren
Gashimov Memorial, Shamkir 2019
White to Play and Draw

(23) B.Jobava-I.Smirin
Chebanenko Memorial, Chisinau 2019
Black to Play

(24) Ding Liren-P.Harikrishna
Shenzhen 2019
Black to Play and Draw

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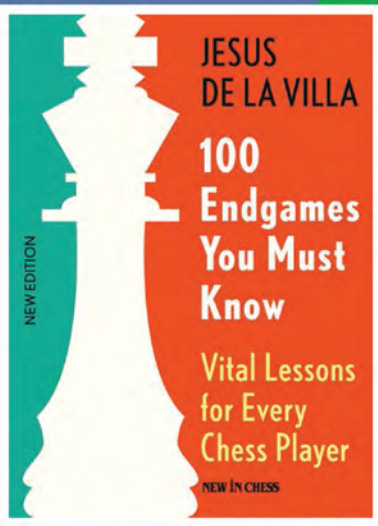
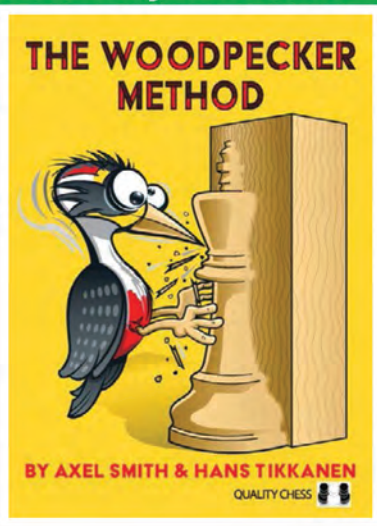
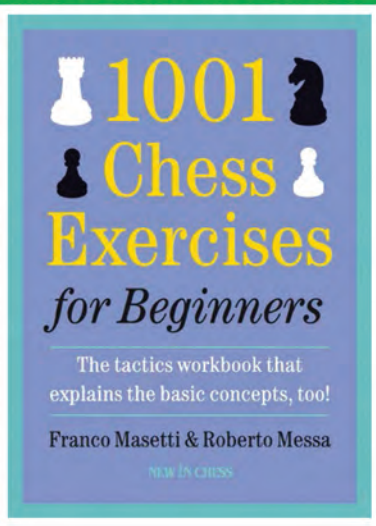
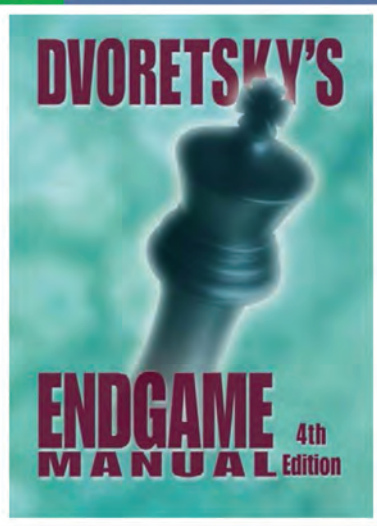








Twa Pairs of Thabills wt thair Men

Craig Pritchett reports from the site of Scotland's strongest ever tournament

With that as an introduction – it translates from the late Medieval Scots into 'two chessboards with their pieces' – you won't be surprised to hear that four of the game's top modern superstars settled in nicely at historic Lindores Abbey, site of the now ruined Abbey's spacious grounds and a brand new Scotch Whisky Distillery. Lindores Abbey is situated just outside the small Fife town of Newburgh, on the south bank of the River Tay, midway between the two cities of Dundee and Perth.

The 'twa pairs of thabills' are mentioned in a 1480s Abbey inventory, when the Abbey still accommodated a significant Tironensian monastic order, part of a wider European brotherhood, whose spiritual base lay in the small French town of Tiron. Chess was pretty certainly played at the Abbey around 1500, though the actual recorded chess sets haven't been found. The game duly merits a prominent place in the beautifully presented history section of the modern Distillery.

The whole place, quite apart from its scenic setting and stunningly achieved incorporation of the old Abbey ruins and the new Distillery into a wonderfully conceived piece of architecture that is well worth an appreciative visit alone (tours are available), resonates history. Founded in 1191 by David, Earl of Huntingdon, younger brother of King William I of Scotland, the Abbey hosted many medieval monarchs and prominent nobles over the years.

One of those, the 'real' Braveheart, then recently appointed Guardian of Scotland, William Wallace, retired with his troops to the Abbey in 1298, having won a strategic 'skirmish' against an English force, at Earnside, a couple of miles up a hill behind Lindores, overlooking the Tay. More peacefully, the Abbey's monks were known for the quality of their orchards, especially their plums and pears, cereal and herbal cultivation, brewing and eventually distilling. The Abbey is nowadays widely held by many in the trade to be the spiritual home of Scotch whisky.

This latter claim dates back to a 1494 entry in the Exchequer Rolls that translates from the original Latin into a record by the Scottish King's comptroller of payment to the Abbey for an order of "aquavite" production, in a quantity that would have been the equivalent of about 400 bottles of today's whisky. According to the Lindores Abbey Distillery website, "This entry in the Exchequer Rolls is recognised as the first written evidence of the production of Aqua Vitae, or Water of Life (Uisge Beatha) or, as we call it today, whisky, in Scotland".

Ding Liren is about to play 33 ♗xe6, which forced Karjakin to resign in round 3. Magnus was most impressive at times, but Ding could well have won Lindores had he taken his chances.

The new Distillery dates from only 2017. Inspired by the history, its owners, Helen and Drew McKenzie Smith, decided to revive the local distilling tradition, lost not long after the enforced abandonment of the Abbey following the distinctly Calvinist Scottish Reformation of 1560. As Scotch whisky must be matured for at least three years and a day and, even then, the master distiller has a final say, Lindores Abbey Distillery still has a year to wait until the earliest possible date of its first commercial release of a single malt whisky.

In the meantime, the Lindores team have made use of younger whisky spirit drawn from the maturing casks to create a commercial release that has been combined with a variety of local botanicals to create a drink that is perhaps midway between a whisky and a gin, although they claim it isn't exactly either. It has an extraordinarily fruity, floral and spicy bouquet, and, at 40% alc, packs quite a punch. They call it – what else? – Aqua Vitae.

In such an environment, our four combatant superstars could hardly fail to be inspired. Equally the visiting Chess24.com production crew, fronted by the ever-enthusiastic and penetrating Genna Sosonko and Danny King, and the throng of excited spectators of all genders and ages, including, to the obvious delight of the sponsors, numerous youngsters, many of them exuberantly brandishing autograph books.

It really was that quite open-plan kind of tournament. You could watch the live commentary either directly or on large screens dotted throughout the venue, including in the food and snack courtyard, open to the East of Scotland Central Lowland elements, except for a narrow covered walkway. The weather, by and large, at this time of year, tends to be benign, often quite pleasant, and generally behaved itself.

If you stayed in the building, you had a choice to browse the history section that was also kitted out with chess sets between the several easy learning modules should you fancy a quick game or were challenged to play by anyone. Beside that was a press room that merged into a popular tea or coffee area. Everywhere was roomy, with handy access to fresh air and amazingly green scenery. Far from any stuffy city-centre chess stereotype!

Upstairs, before you reached the restricted room that housed the top end of two vast copper whisky stills and the two boards on which the four players played, you might wander, with a pass, into the VIP room,

which really was quite plush, offering a bar and light food refreshment. It also contained two live boards that excited animated comment among a wide range of invitees of varying strengths and forthright or cautious opinions, none of them, of course, burdened by the problem of playing any actual moves.

It was in the VIP room that I had the pleasure of meeting Henrik Carlsen, Magnus's father. Our chat coincided with Magnus's first round game against Ding Liren, in which he roused everyone's spirits by opting for the sharp Sämisch Variation against Ding's Nimzo-Indian Defence. Of course, Henrik didn't give anything away about Carlsen's opening research or match strategy. Anyway, we had a great old chat about the game and all sorts.

From that point on it became clear that the Carlsen clan would be the one to watch in the tournament – Henrik for his insightful calm and friendliness to all who spoke to him, and Magnus because of his wonderful chess on the board. I was instantly persuaded that Magnus had come here to mix things up and go for an outright tournament win, albeit taking calculated risks, straight after that striking Sämisch 4 a3 against Ding.

Magnus, to me, was the standout competitor. He had prepared surprises in the opening for each of his opponents and was much more ready to take the game to all of them. To me, his two standout games were: round 5 against Karjakin, which was highly adventurous and hugely entertaining; but, especially, his brilliant, absolutely world championship class defensive achievement to hold the most difficult half-point against Ding in round 6 – a gripping encounter which will be thoroughly analysed by Jonathan Speelman no less later in these pages.

What struck me most about that round 6 game was Carlsen's instantaneous judgement in the live broadcast post mortem. He thought that Ding, with his clear extra pawn, should probably have kept knights on the board rather than exchange them into a rook and pawn endgame, as he (Carlsen) sensed that such endgames often offered much more complexity than most players appreciate and often quite hidden resources offering scope to achieve surprise draws.

I don't think that anyone else in that room, including perhaps Ding himself and other very strong players, remotely thought that way, certainly not as swiftly and with such remarkable clarity. Almost everyone else intuited that the (very clearly) advantageous rook and pawn endgame that arose on the board simply 'must' suffice for a win and, especially in rapidplay, with the clock running low, would have played Ding's way.

Yet Carlsen proved his point brilliantly. The defence may have been incredibly difficult for Carlsen, but so, too, was any win that may or may not have been in the position for Ding. Magnus's poise, mental toughness, precision and fighting spirit in that game reminded me not just of Garry Kasparov at his best, but also Bobby Fischer.

Let's hope for a reprise of this wonderfully successful event and Carlsen's participation in it, next year.

Post-game interviews are now the norm. At Lindores Abbey the fine commentary duo of Genna Sosonko and our own Daniel King regularly got the best out of the world-class line-up.

Watched by Ding Liren and the legendary Alexander Bakh, who ensured that the tournament ran smoothly, Sergey Karjakin adds his moniker to a cask of Lindores Abbey Distillery's finest.

The full line-up of players, organisers, commentators and sponsors who all played their part in making Scotland's strongest ever chess tournament such a fantastic event to attend and follow.

Lindores Abbey Stars, Scotland, 25 - 26 May 2019 (Cat.22, average rating = 2798)

	Player	Country	Rating	1		2		3		4		Pts	TPR
1	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2861	*	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	**3½**	2834
2	Ding Liren	CHN	2805	½	½	*	*	1	½	½	0	**3**	2795
3	Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2752	½	½	0	½	*	*	1	½	**3**	2813
4	Vishy Anand	IND	2774	0	½	½	1	0	½	*	*	**2½**	2749

How to Celebrate Your Club Centenary:

100 Years of Chester Chess Club

Chester Chess Club President Phil Crocker reports on a very special year

Founded in its current form after the first World War, Chester Chess Club is celebrating its centenary this year. The leading light in its first half century was Bill Turner, who helped found the Chester YMCA Club in 1919. He was also instrumental in bringing the BCF Championships to Chester in 1934, 1952 and 1979, and in founding the Chester and District League.

This league is active today, with teams from Colwyn Bay to Frodsham. In their centenary year Chester managed appropriately enough to win the first division title, the knockout championship and to get a fourth(!) team promoted to the first division. In recent years the club has thrived in part thanks to also running a dedicated junior club and entering several junior-based teams in the local Wirral league.

Recently we added all manner of new-fangled innovations like a club website, Facebook and Twitter. However, we also did some research on the last 100 years. That was helped by still having one player, Graham Bromley, who was present for the 50-year celebration. That included a trip to the Isle of Man to play a match. The picture we found shows everyone suitably dressed in suits and everything very formally arranged.

From the league handbook from 50 years ago we also confirmed that one notable player at the club was Walter Korn, famous as the author of *MCO*. He was a refugee player during WW2 when he won the club championship twice in the seasons 1942-44.

We also came across an article from the *Liverpool Echo* (see right) in 1934 referring to how play at Chester was still "erratic" and offering some contemporary insight into the absence of women from the game: "They do not like the great silence and the unwritten law that forbids a player to fidget."

I thought it might be helpful to share some of the detail of our centenary celebrations in case readers wish to hold similar events. Maybe it could even help you avoid some of the pitfalls we encountered and describe below.

Find the right club

If a centenary celebration is your goal, it doesn't make any sense to join a newly-formed club. Even if younger readers aged, say, 5 selected such a club now, the odds of reaching the age of 105 and being a compos mentis chess player are not attractive. Much better to short-circuit the process like I did and join a club already in the nervous nineties. The one mistake I made was to fail to sufficiently lower my gaze at the AGM when a new club president was sought. I doubt any club election has been contested for several decades so that was enough to see me in charge with about a year to go.

Plan ahead

This is the sort of thing chess books implore you to do: to think through all the steps required and when they need to be done. It's really quite a dull activity. Which brings us to the most important aspect of planning: passing the work on to others so that you can enjoy the events without getting your hands dirty. Now chess clubs aren't normally endowed with large pots of

Chess At Chester

There are so many exciting events taking place that we almost overlooked the Chess Congress at Chester. We are sorry to read that "play is still erratic, and there is too much luck for a tournament of this class." We do not know what this means, but we insist on believing that there is plenty of class at Chester. The fact that there is a Chess Congress at Chester provides proof. There is nothing vulgar or bawling about chess. We never hear of complaints about body-line stuff, or players refusing to play before they are asked. There is a calmness about a chess congress which is soothing in these days of noisy publicity. Chess players do not seek advertisement. Their noble features do not decorate cigarette cards. They are not swapped for jockeys, or prize fighters, or other riff-raff of the vulgar, hustling world. Chess players sit in corners, and think, and think. When they move there is a mild sensation. The best players are called masters; the others are called mutts by waitresses, who want to clear up. We never hear of mistresses at chess. It is not a game that makes much appeal to women. They do not like the great silence and the unwritten law that forbids a player to fidget. Moreover, they are inclined to regard with suspicion any man who goes broody like a chess player. No doubt they are right. When a man gets chess on the brain he is not an amusing companion. Nevertheless, he is harmless. Chess is held to be a brainy game, and if the bumps of chess players were felt in a scientific manner we have no doubt many surprising discoveries would be made. Though the play at Chester is reported to be erratic the greatest decorum prevails, and no player has been warned or sent out of the room; in fact, the behaviour at Chester might serve as an example to other sports and pastimes which attract more limelight.

money, so it's best to rely on some cheap motivational tricks. For example, we introduced the role of Centenary Events Officer. When you abbreviate it to CEO it sounds quite important and is the sort of thing which would enhance any CV and impress on a first date.

Suitably cheaply motivated, our CEO produced a list of possible events which we whittled down to the following: a tournament, a simul, branded merchandise, a dinner, a game of the century competition and something to engage with the wider population. We'll cover these in turn.

Dinner for 18

A dinner sounds simple, but even here things are not so easy. How formal should it be? Should there be a guest speaker? Should you invite former members or league representatives? What about partners? Or juniors?

We decided to keep it as simple as possible. For example, we conducted a survey to inform our decision on partners. Shockingly, we failed to find a single partner who had any interest in going to a dinner with a bunch of chess players. We leave it to future researchers to ask why.

For our 'guest speaker' we chose a senior club member who would be able to talk meaningfully about the club. We ended up at The Architect pub near Chester racecourse which gave us a private room and enabled us to pay individually for what we wanted to eat on the night, thereby avoiding all the pain of collecting deposits. Our speaker John Carleton (also of Spirit of Atticus fame) talked us through some of the detail of the last 100 years and amusingly linked into the Village People classic "It's fun to *play* at the YMCA".

It's a mug's game

This one worked out pretty well. One of our members volunteered to design a club logo and after some protracted voting, we decided on our favourite. There are a bunch of companies which will take a digital photo of your logo and put it on a shirt, pen or a mug. Demand for polo shirts proved fairly low, but mugs proved a runaway success.

For a cost of around £5 each you can get a batch of club mugs produced. Just a warning though. If you thought that parking companies were best in class at extracting every last penny they can through their charging policies, you clearly haven't seen mug pricing. I'm not sure if the mug companies have teams of PhD scientists or some souped-up *AlphaZero*-style AI thing going on, but you will definitely need your wits about you.

Firstly, you need to find a discount code to get the price down towards the £5 mark. Then you need to chose the right volume from fixed options such as 10, 20, 50, 100. It's not possible to simply order, say, 60. And if you decide to order a batch of 40 and follow up with a batch of 20, the pricing will likely have changed or the discount code won't be valid any more for the second order. You also have to dodge the 'special offer' you get as soon as you place your order which you can only execute in the next 10 minutes. This is likely to be the same unit price you just paid, but it may well be the last chance you get to achieve that price.

Notwithstanding these gripes, we were very pleased with the mugs we ordered from Vistaprint. In comparison, ordering branded club pens was really quite dull: we simply ordered 100 pens for £60 and were done.

Formal attire to the fore as Chester, seated on the right, take on an Isle of Man team to celebrate their first 50 years. Graham Bromley, still a Chester member, is seated in the middle.

Game of the Century

I think I messed this one up a little. I presumed that with around 40 adult members and games allowed from any time in the last 100 years, together with the allure of a book prize and a free centenary pen for all entrants, someone might enter. Having launched the competition in December I'm still waiting for the first entrant. I guess members are a little shy. I do, however, have access to the following game where Chester second team player Chris Doran made a 2500 Latvian Grandmaster look extremely ordinary.

V.Meijers-C.Doran
EU Championship, Liverpool 2008
Sicilian Dragon

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 g6 6 ♗e3 ♗g7 7 f3 ♘c6 8 ♕d2 0-0 9 ♗c4 ♗d7 10 ♗b3 ♘e5 11 g4 ♖c8 12 h4 b5 13 h5 ♘c4 14 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 ♘dxb5

Meijers had previously faced 16...a6, but Dragon aficionado Chris has a more active plan in mind. Given the game result, it looks perhaps a little naive to repeat such a sharp line.

16...♗xb5 17 ♘xb5 ♕b8

18 a4

The computer prefers 18 b3 when Chris might have tried the exchange sacrifice 18...♕xb5 19 bxc4 ♕xc4 and here the risky 20 0-0-0 is the only way to avoid immediate disaster on the a1-h8 diagonal.

18...a6 19 g5 axb5 20 gxf6 ♖xf6

Black is already doing fine and White's next effectively leads to a lost position due to his exposed king.

21 ♗h6? ♗xh6 22 ♕xh6 ♖f7 23 axb5 ♖xc2 24 b4 ♕c8 25 ♔d1 ♖c4

(see diagram at top of next page)

A nice position to have against a GM after 25 moves. Chris now mops up as if he was the GM facing the amateur.

26 ♖h2 ♖d4+ 27 ♖d2 ♖xf3 28 ♔e2 ♖xe4+! 29 ♔xf3 ♕f5+ 30 ♔g2 ♖g4+ 31 ♔h1 ♕e4+ 32 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 0-1

Mate follows.

Simul

Several top masters have given simuls in Chester including Alekhine, Gligoric, Hort, Adorjan, a certain Kasparov and somebody called Palliser. Given the status of previous visitors, we wanted to do something suitably grand. When you start researching simulnomics you find that there is something like a going rate for hiring a 2400-2600 GM. If you charge, say, £10 for entries, then if you're lucky you might almost break even before room hire costs and travel expenses. We were about to start investigating the more rarefied rates for 2600-2700 GMs when we happened on a much better solution.

By combining a book promotion for *Game Changer* with a simul, we gained an entertaining talk about AI with a world-class simul befitting Chester's great history. We opened the invitation up to local clubs and ended up with around 40 players watching the talk and over 20 players for the simul against Matthew Sadler. Ultimately Sadler won all the games, but not before salvaging an awkward position against Chester's top-rated junior Daniel Savidge. Tragically Dan blundered his queen in the one-on-one finale.

Chess players don't eat fruit

Well, more specifically, they are reluctant to pay for it, but we'll come to that later. Our signature event was a tournament. Despite being a suitably-sized and located town to have an annual competition, Chester doesn't have a regular event. Maybe it's because of some of the issues we encountered as newbie organisers. As our guiding compass we took Stewart Reuben's understated masterpiece *The Chess Organiser's Handbook*. It includes some useful practical information such as how many square metres per player you need in a hall. That's about two square metres for non-elite events.

However, I do feel that there are some additional chapters which could usefully be included in a future edition:

i. Why it is that potential venues often want exorbitant rates for a single day's hire?

ii. What do you do when having agreed your venue with, say, a local sports centre, you are subsequently told without explanation that you are unwelcome?

iii. Why the first thing you should do in this litigious world is to buy public liability insurance or few venues will even talk to you (see the ECF website for a possible insurer).

iv. What to do when none of your key suppliers respond to your emails or calls.

v. Optimum allocation of toilet facilities given the known gender imbalances.

vi. How to stay calm when hardly anyone has entered with three weeks to go.

Joking apart, this last point is very serious for organisers of one-off events. The results of a successful publicity and a poor publicity campaign look more or less identical until the final couple of weeks when everyone or no one enters. Allowing entries without penalty so late is great in the short term for players, but may well put off organisers from taking the financial risk. For a couple of months we had more entries from our twin town in Germany than from the UK. I remain grateful to the player from Chorlton who entered several months in advance.

In the event we got loads of entries in the final couple of weeks. We had a decent turnout from our own club, from some former members, and from the North of England and Wales. In the Open Stephen Gordon was victorious, closely followed by current top player John Carleton and former member Paul Townsend. I spent much of the tournament manning our refreshments stand (under close supervision from my wife). Our pricing strategy of charging almost everything at 50p generated many complaints that it was too cheap, but still turned a small surplus. The only thing we couldn't sell was the fruit that my wife thought would complement the ubiquitous crisps and chocolate. In the end we barely managed to give it away.

Many chess masters have played in Chester or given simultaneous exhibitions. Pictured above is the legendary Hungarian GM András Adorján of Black is OK! *fame giving a simul at the YMCA in Chester in 1977.*

The ever enthusiastic authors of the best-selling Game Changer*, Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan, visited Chester this year to discuss their work and give a simul. They are pictured with sisters Freya (left) and Jasmine, both keen members of Chester Chess Club's junior section.*

Why the Romans had it easy

Chester really came of age when the Romans set up a major fortress there the best part of a couple of millennia ago. It was perhaps chosen due to its proximity to the Welsh border just a few miles march away. Maybe it was the Romans or perhaps it was a few hundred years later that the law was introduced that it was OK to shoot a Welshman found within the city walls after dark. To this day we find that players (at least the male ones) visiting Chester from teams such as Colwyn Bay and Rhyl aim to park as close to our match venue as possible and are disinclined to go for a pre-match stroll.

Now life was simple in Roman times. There were no GDPR or risk management departments. If the Romans had your email they would use it, regardless of whether you had given explicit consent. And if you lived in Wales, but played chess in England, I dare say they'd store your details on the same grading database as the folks living and playing in England. And chess organisers could presumably see lists of folks who had registered, but didn't have a grade. Maybe even if they came from Yorkshire.

Long story short, if you're not experienced in the day-to-day management of grading and registration, it's a bit of a nightmare to navigate the bureaucracy, particularly if you boldly decide to make your tournament FIDE-rated. Having various charges, including and excluding game fees, also makes things pretty confusing. Even one of our organising committee who was ECF-registered was sufficiently confused to end up mistakenly paying the entry fee including game fee supplement.

For reasons I could no longer come close to explaining accurately (and probably never understood at the time), I found myself phoning the father of one junior entrant to see if his son, but not daughter (or was it daughter, but not son?) would be willing to be registered for England even though he/she lived over the Welsh border in Wrexham. The same father had previously phoned up the ECF to confirm registration for his registered but not yet graded son/daughter for whom we could find no registration evidence. No doubt due to inexperience our administration was below par, but nevertheless it does seem to be unnecessarily complicated.

Another thing the Romans had sorted was military discipline. Now in these enlightened times we felt obliged to operate an organising team. As anyone who was worked in a large (maybe any) corporate organisation knows, teamwork often isn't what it's cracked up to be. We had one person planning things, another person sending out emails pleading for entries, someone else managing the website and email, another person receiving post, and someone else in charge of the bank account. That meant it was difficult to resolve even simple questions like had someone entered the tournament and paid.

It doesn't rain, but it pours. So in the middle of all this, our friendly local bank decided they would no longer be willing to offer us a replacement cheque book, unless that is we could provide a copy of a club constitution to them. Now somehow our chess club managed to govern itself for a hundred years without a constitution. Any readers working in risk management will presumably be coming out in a cold sweat at this point. How could a chess club know what its goals are without putting it all in writing?

Now for full disclosure, I used to have such a job myself, but surely a local chess club isn't really in the same ballpark as an offshore entity hiring oil tankers without GPS transponders in the Persian Gulf? Our club finances had been managed with quill pen and cheque book since its founding. I really don't think our revenues would interest Mexican drug barons. And if we really were part of some massive terrorist conspiracy presumably we'd be capable of making a payment without a cheque or even, perish the thought, of forging a club constitution.

We were thus plunged unexpectedly into a world of bank transfers and electronic payments. At the same time for our tournament we were still receiving postal orders. Remember them? Apparently they come in crossed and uncrossed formats and, you guessed it, our bank really didn't like the look of one of the formats we received.

Anyway, enough rambling about bureaucracy. I think the main point we learned was that tournament administration is much harder than it often looks. There is definitely something to be said for keeping your first event as simple as possible. For example, choosing a one day rather than a full weekend event makes sense, as does only grading it nationally.

Chess in the Park

I hope our members and the local chess community have enjoyed our centenary events and that the reader has learned a little of the associated organisational perils. For our final event we will be keeping it simple and meeting up to play some games in Grosvenor Park in Chester. If you happen to be passing through this summer, we'll be the ones trying earnestly to protect our pieces from frisbees, footballs and dogs.

A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

Altibox Norway Chess - @NorwayChess
With his victory at the first Lindores Abbey Chess Stars Tournament held in Scotland last week, @MagnusCarlsen is currently on a streak of six straight tournament wins, five this year! Which one will be the next?

Douglas Griffin - @dgriffinchess
Some non-chess, whisky-related info. The English word 'whisky' is derived from the Scottish #Gaelic 'uisge beatha' - literally, 'the water of life'. Hence the references to Aqua Vitae at #LindoresAbbey. #ChessAtLindores #Ghàidhlig

2700chess - @2700chess
Grischuk (35) and Nepomniachtchi (28) both have the same live rating of 2775.2, albeit with Grischuk having the higher ranking due to more games played in this rating period. They will face off today in the final of the #GrandPrixFIDE in Moscow.

Peter Heine Nielsen - @PHChess
Congratulations @LeelaChessZero! 50.5-43.5 vs. Stockfish is a groundbreaking result. Despite the difference in strength now well established, I hope the TCEC-matches will continue. The chess content has been nothing short of spectacular!

Viswanathan Anand - @vishy64theking
Congrats @NihalSarin! Enjoy being 2600... Olympiad 2020...we look forward! Nihal has made a lot of progress in the last year. His tenacity and focus is commendable.

Eurosport UK - @Eurosport_UK
24 Hours With: @Vachier_Lagrave! Practice makes perfect as the world No 6 chases his dream of becoming @theworldchess champion!

ECF - @ecfchess
Great words from @ginger_gm: "The beauty of chess is it can be whatever you want it to be. It transcends language, age, race, religion, politics, gender and socioeconomic background..." in @CommonWealthMag

Follow us on Twitter! @CHESS_Magazine

A Magnus Masterclass

Acclaimed endgame expert Jonathan Speelman takes a look at some recent examples of Carlsen's magical play in the final stages of the game

During his recent wondrous run of form, Magnus Carlsen has rediscovered the art of winning classical games against the world's best, although there has been something of a converse reaction in his rapidplay and blitz results, which have presumably become very slightly less crucial to him.

A great part of that art lies in the world champion's almost preternatural endgame ability, both in teasing out wins from positions which by all rights should be readily defensible and in defending the near indefensible when he has to. I'm going to look at both of these aspects with a selection of Carlsen's recent endings.

We start with a fascinating ending from the GRENKE Chess Classic.

F.Vallejo Pons-M.Carlsen
Karlsruhe 2019

This should certainly be drawn 'with best play', but Carlsen has pressure against White's kingside.

34...♗b8 35 ♔g2

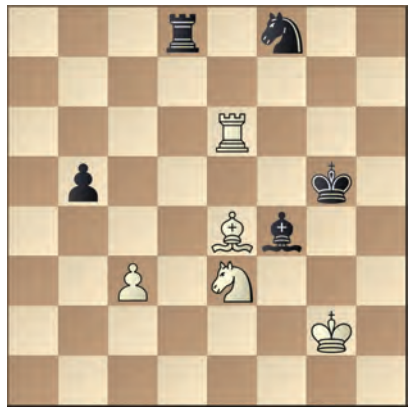
35 ♗xb7 ♗xg3 may well be defensible in theory, but you'd certainly not want to give Black a ready-made attack in practice.

35...b5 36 axb5 axb5 37 ♘e3

A bad square for the knight because it can be hit by ...f4 in various lines. Instead, 37 ♘a3 should be OK and if 37...f4 38 ♗e4 ♘f8 39 ♖b6.

37...♖d2+

37...f4! seems to be even stronger: 38 ♗e4 (38 ♘f1 fxg3 39 ♖b6 ♘h4+ 40 ♔h3 ♘xf3 41 ♖xb5+ ♗e5 42 ♘xg3 is winning for Black) 38...♘f8 39 gxf4+ ♗xf4.



An important line is 40 ♖b6 ♗xe3 41 ♖xb5+. This is apparently winning without the c3-pawn, so I presume that it's winning here too. I also asked the tablebase about the evaluation with same-coloured bishops and this is also winning: for instance, if White has ♔g2, ♗g3 and ♖c2 against Black's ♔e4, ♘g6, ♗e3 and ♖d8 then Black to move 'mates in 35', starting with 1...♘e7.

Here 40 ♖e7 ♗xe3 41 ♗c6 ♖d3 42 ♗xb5 ♖xc3 is quite similar. As usual with this material balance, it's losing for White unless he can do something immediately, and he can't.

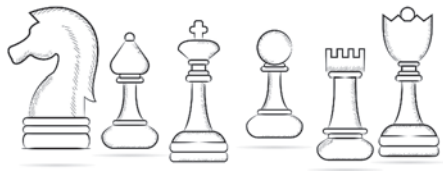
38 ♔h3 ♖d3 39 ♗e2 ♖xc3 40 ♗xb5 f4 41 ♗e8 ♘f8 42 ♖b6 ♗e5

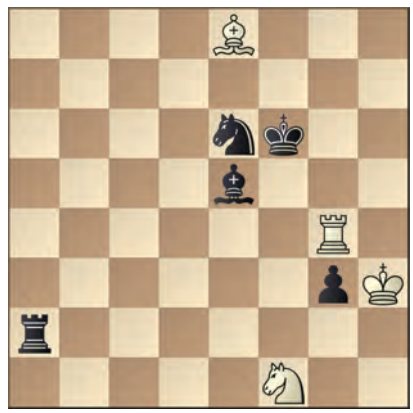
42...fxe3 43 ♖xb8 e2 44 ♖b1 ♖e3 45 ♖e1 ♖xe8 46 ♔g2 defends.

43 ♘f1 fxg3 44 ♖c6

Alternatively, 44 ♖b5 ♔f6 45 ♘d2 g2+ 46 ♔xg2 ♖c2 47 ♖d5 ♗f4 48 ♗a4 ♖a2 49 ♔f3 ♗xd2 and it's 'mate in 71'.

44...♖a3 45 ♖b6 ♖a2 46 ♖b4! ♘e6 47 ♖g4+! ♔f6





48 ♗c6?

Going into the wrong utterly vile ending. Instead, 48 ♖xg3! ♗xg3 49 ♔xg3 should apparently be a draw.

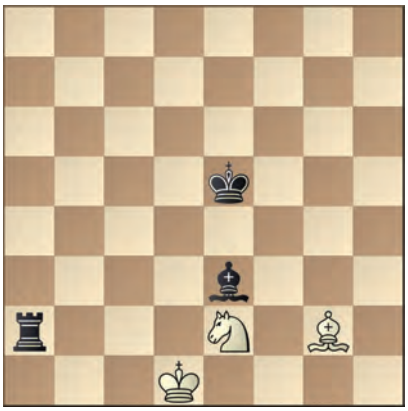
48...g2! 49 ♗xg2 ♘f4+ 50 ♖xf4+! ♗xf4

The endgame tablebases say this is lost for White: 'Mate in 54', with the knight dropping off on move 34. These tablebase positions are often completely baffling to the human eye with protracted apparently aimless manoeuvring until it all comes together at the end. However, this one is much closer to our normal understanding as Black fights to disrupt the enemy forces and then gradually gains purchase. Incidentally the attack is much nastier here due to the opposite-coloured bishops and if the white bishop were on a dark square, f2 say, then it would be a draw with best defence.

51 ♗f3 ♗b8 52 ♘g3 ♔g5 53 ♘e2 ♗c7 54 ♔g2 ♔h4 55 ♔f2 ♗b6+ 56 ♔e1 ♗e3 57 ♔d1 ♔g5

57...♖d2+ is apparently the best move of all, with this line given: 58 ♔e1 ♖d8 59 ♗b7 ♔g4 60 ♔f1 ♖b8 61 ♗e4 ♗d2 62 ♔g2 ♖f8 63 ♘d4 ♖f6 64 ♗b7 ♗b4 65 ♘e2 ♗e1 66 ♘c1 ♖f2+ 67 ♔g1 ♖c2 68 ♘d3 ♗h4 69 ♔f1 ♔f5 70 ♗f3 ♖d2 71 ♗e2 ♔e4 72 ♘f2+ ♔e3 73 ♘g4+ ♔f4 74 ♘f2 ♖c2 75 ♘d1 ♗d8 76 ♘f2 ♗b6 77 ♔e1 ♖c1+ 78 ♘d1 ♗a5+ 79 ♔f2 ♖c2 80 ♔f1 ♔g3 81 ♘f2 ♖c1+ 82 ♗d1 ♗b6 83 ♘h1+ ♔h2 84 ♔e2 ♔xh1, etc.

58 ♗e4 ♔f6 59 ♗f3 ♔e5 60 ♗g2



60...♔d6

Here the tablebases give 60...♗d2 to separate the knight from the king: 61 ♗h1 ♗b4 62 ♗f3 ♖b2 63 ♗g2 ♔f6 64 ♗f3 ♔g5 65 ♔c1 ♖d2 66 ♔b1 ♗a3 67 ♔a1 ♗c5 68 ♔b1 ♗a7 69 ♘c1 ♔f4 70 ♗h5 ♔e3 71 ♘b3 ♖g2 72 ♗e8 ♔d3 73 ♗c6 ♖f2 74 ♘c1+ ♔c3 75 ♘a2+ ♔c4 76 ♗d7 ♗c5 77 ♗e6+ ♔d4 78 ♔c1 ♗a3+ 79 ♔d1 ♔e3 80 ♗c4 ♖d2+ 81 ♔e1 ♖c2 82 ♗d5 ♗b4+ 83 ♔d1 ♖d2+ 84 ♔c1 ♗a3+ 85 ♔b1 ♖b2+ 86 ♔a1 ♔d2 87 ♗c6 ♖b3 88 ♗a4 ♖e3 89 ♘b4 ♗xb4, etc.

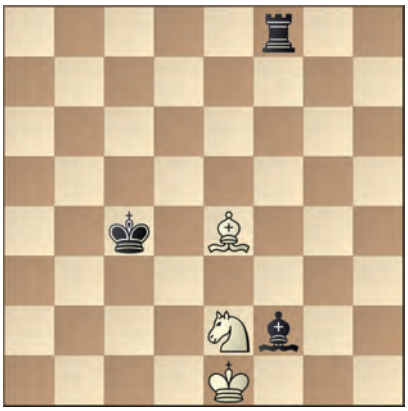
61 ♗e4 ♔c5 62 ♗f5 ♖d2+ 63 ♔e1 ♖d8 64 ♗e4 ♔c4 65 ♔f1

65 ♘g3 was apparently tougher.

65...♖f8+! 66 ♔e1

66 ♔g2 ♖f2+ 67 ♔h1! is a lovely stalemate defence (if 67...♖xe2? 68 ♗d3+!), which would in practice have been extremely annoying for Black, though the tablebase evaluation doesn't change of course.

66...♗f2+!



67 ♔d2

If I were defending this vile endgame and saw the stalemate defence then I think I would have been at least a little tempted to try it, not because Black would ever remotely fall into it, but on the off chance that he hadn't seen it in advance. In that case it would have been annoying to Black to be forced to work again when the immediate end looked in sight, and frustrating the opponent was the one slight pleasure which White could hope for while he suffered.

The only reason not to defend like this would be if it was really easy for Black with the king on h1. This is hard to judge, but in fact Black does still have to do quite a lot of work. The main line goes: 67 ♔f1 ♗b6+ 68 ♔g2 ♖f2+ 69 ♔h1 ♗c7! 70 ♗b7 ♔d3 71 ♗a6+ ♔e3 72 ♗c4 ♗d6 73 ♗a6 ♗b8 74 ♔g1 ♗a7 75 ♘c3 ♔f4 76 ♔h1 ♖b2 77 ♘e2+ ♔f3 78 ♔h2 ♖b1 79 ♘g3 ♗b8 80 ♗e2+ ♔f2 81 ♔h3 ♗xg3.

67...♖d8+ 68 ♔c2 ♗e3

With the king boxed into the dark-squared corner, it's almost over.

69 ♗f3 ♖d2+ 70 ♔b1 ♔b3 71 ♘c1+ ♔a3 72 ♘e2 ♖b2+ 73 ♔a1 ♖b8 0-1

A very impressive performance by Carlsen who pressed Vallejo in a position which looked close to harmless and then was merciless when he got the ending without pawns. Of course, neither of them knew the theoretical verdict when they started (or at least I presume that Magnus doesn't have such things on tap), but it was clear at the outset that it was deeply unpleasant and Carlsen remained admirably calm and focussed as he shepherded the white monarch to its doom.

M.Carlsen-V.Anand

Wijk aan Zee 2019

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♗c5 6 ♗xc6 dxc6 7 d3 ♕d6 8 h3 ♗e6 9 ♗e3 ♘d7 10 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 11 ♕d2 ♘d7 12 d4 exd4 13 ♘xd4 c5 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 0-0-0 ♕xd2+ 16 ♔xd2 ♘e5 17 f4!

Kicking the knight before it can get comfortable. 17 b3 g5! is fine for Black.

17...♘c4+ 18 ♔c1 ♔e7 19 b3 ♘d6! 20 e5 ♘f5

21 ♘e4

Tiger Hillarp Persson analysed this game in detail for ChessBase and here pointed out that 21 g4 may be better immediately since if 21...♘h4 (21...♘d4 is possible) 22 f5! and Black can't capture on f5: 22...exf5? 23 ♘d5+ ♔f7 24 e6+! ♔g6 25 ♘xc7 is indeed awful, but 22...♖ad8 doesn't look too bad at all.

21...b6 22 g4 ♘h4

A nice square for the knight where it can't be disturbed, except after a protracted king march from c1 to g3.

23 ♖hf1 ♖ad8?!

Vishy Anand has felt the force of Carlsen, having lost to him three times this year.

23...♖hf8 was much more accurate.

24 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 25 f5! exf5

After 25...♖d5 *Houdini* points out 26 f6+ gxf6 27 ♘xf6 ♖xe5 28 ♘xh7 ♖e2 29 ♘g5.

26 gxf5

White's pawns have great potential, but are also exposed so the evaluation depends on the short-term tactics. If Black can cause serious trouble then he may be equal or even better, but otherwise White should have the advantage.

26...♖f8

After 26...♖d5!? 27 ♖f4! ♘g2 28 f6+ gxf6 29 exf6+ ♔f8! (29...♔f7 30 ♖g4 ♖e5 31 ♖g7+ ♔e8 32 ♘g5 is simply winning) 30 ♖g4 ♖d4 31 ♖xg2 (31 c3 h5! 32 cxd4 hxg4 33 hxg4 cxd4 34 g5 ♔f7 should be equal) 31...♖xe4 32 ♖g7 obviously White is better, but Black has decent defensive chances if he plays well: 32...c4 33 ♖xc7 cxb3 34 axb3 ♖h4 35 ♖c6 b5 36 ♖xa6 ♖xh3 and the h-pawn may save Black.

27 f6+ gxf6 28 exf6+ ♔f7?!

28...♔d7! was better since the queenside

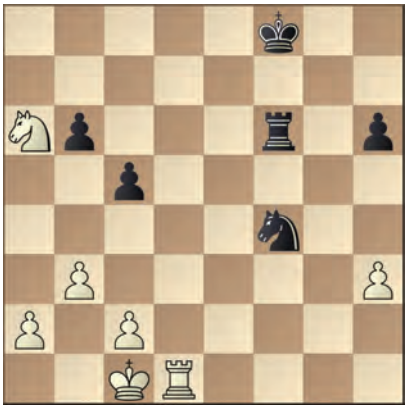
Carlsen defeated Anand at Wijk, Shamkir and Lindores Abbey. He won those three events and also came first at GRENKE and in Abidjan - in all cases aided by his excellent endgame ability.

is defended and Black is able to cope with the f-pawn: for instance, 29 ♖g1 h6 30 ♖g7+ ♔c6 31 ♖h7 ♔d5 32 ♘c3+ ♔d4 33 ♘a4 ♖xf6 34 ♖xc7 is one of *Houdini*'s main lines.

29 ♖f4

Forcing 29...♘g6, after which the king can be driven back, but 29 ♖g1 may be even better, when 29...♖g8 (alternatively, 29...♘f5 30 ♘g5+ ♔e8 31 ♖e1+ ♔d7 32 ♘xh7 ♖f7 33 ♖f1! ♘g3 34 ♖f2 ♘e4 35 ♖f4 ♘g3 36 ♔d1 ♘h5 37 ♖f5 ♘g3 38 ♖g5 ♘e4 39 ♖g7 ♔e6 40 ♔e2 wins, and 29...♘g6? 30 ♘g5+ ♔e8 31 ♘xh7 ♖f7 32 ♖xg6 ♖xh7 33 ♖g8+ ♔f7 34 ♖g7+ ♖xg7 35 fxg7 ♔xg7 36 ♔d2 is a simple pawn ending) 30 ♘g5+ ♔xf6 31 ♘xh7+ ♔f7 32 ♖xg8 ♔xg8 33 ♘f6+ ♔f7 34 ♘d5 looks like it's winning.

29...♘g6 30 ♘g5+ ♔e8 31 ♖f1 h6 32 ♘e6 ♖f7 33 ♖d1! ♖xf6 34 ♘xc7+ ♔f8 35 ♘xa6 ♘f4



Carlsen has won a pawn, but at the cost of moving his knight far from the kingside where Anand is able to counterattack.

36 h4 ♘g6 37 ♖h1 ♖f7 38 h5?!

Driving the black knight to a better square.

38 a4! was better, though the line would be hard to analyse accurately at the board: 38...♖a7 (possibly 38...h5!?) 39 ♘b8 ♖b7 40 ♘c6 ♖c7 41 ♖f1+ ♖f7 (if 41...♔g7 42 ♘d8) 42 ♖e1 ♘xh4 43 ♖h1 ♘f5 (43...♖f4 44 ♘e5 ♔g7 45 ♘c4 wins) 44 ♘e5 ♖g7 45 ♘c4! with a huge advantage since 45...♖g6? is impossible due to 46 ♖f1.

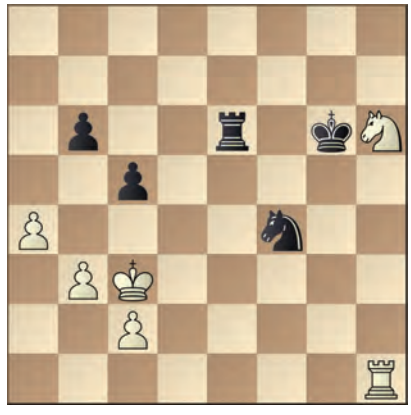
38...♘f4 39 a4 ♔e7 40 ♘c7 ♔f6 41 ♘b5 ♔g5 42 ♘d6 ♖e7 43 ♔b2 ♖e6

After using up a great deal of energy to equalise, Anand begins to go wrong. The text is admittedly perfectly playable, but 43...♘xh5! was simpler, and if 44 ♖g1+ ♔f6 45 ♖h1 ♔g6 46 ♖g1+ ♔f6.

44 ♘f7+ ♔f5 45 ♖d1!

The knight now threatens to get back to the queenside.

45...♔g4 46 ♔c3 ♔xh5 47 ♖h1+ ♔g6 48 ♘xh6



With the gain of the h-pawn, White is now more or less completely safe, but the knight is a long way from home and its path can be blocked.

48...♖e4!

Covering the escape route via g4.

49 ♔b2

49 ♖h2 ♘d5+ 50 ♔b2 c4 sees Black obtain enough play.

49...♖e2! 50 ♘g4!

Setting up ♖h2, whereas after 50 ♔b1 ♘d5 51 ♘g4 ♔g5 52 ♖g1 ♔f4, with the knight sidelined on g4, Black is fine.

50...♘d3+?!

A step in the wrong direction. Instead, 50...♔f5 51 ♖g1 ♘d3+ 52 ♔c3 ♘b4 53 ♔c4 ♘xc2 54 ♔b5 ♖e6 is absolutely fine for Black.

51 ♔c3 ♘b4?!

Missing 51...♘e1! 52 ♖h2 ♖e4 and since the knight controls g2, Black is fine: for example, 53 ♘f2 ♖e2 54 ♔c4 ♖xc2+ 55 ♔b5 c4 56 bxc4 ♖b2+ 57 ♔c6 ♘f3 58 ♖g2+ ♔f7 59 ♔b7 ♘e5 and the draw is clear.

52 ♖h2!

52...♖xh2!?

Damage limitation. White is now clearly better, but Black's position should be defensible.

52...♖e4 53 ♖g2 ♔f5 54 ♘h6+ ♔f6 55 ♖f2+ ♔e6 56 ♘f5 was surely defensible too, though with rooks on the board as well, it wouldn't be at all pleasant for Black.

53 ♘xh2 ♔f5 54 ♘f3 ♔e4 55 ♘e1 ♔d5 56 ♘d3 ♘c6

56...♘a2+? almost works, but the resulting pawn ending is lost if White plays accurately: 57 ♔b2 ♘b4 58 c4+! (58 ♘xb4+? cxb4 59 c3 bxc3+ 60 ♔xc3 ♔c5 is only a draw) 58...♔e4 59 ♘xb4 cxb4 60 ♔c2 ♔d4 61 ♔d2 ♔e4 62 ♔e2 ♔d4 63 ♔f3 ♔c3 64 a5! bxa5 65 c5 a4 66 c6 a3 67 c7 a2 68 c8♕+ ♔b2 (if 68...♔xb3 69 ♕c1) 69 ♕h8+ ♔b1 70 ♕h1+ ♔b2 71 ♕g2+ ♔b1 (or 71...♔xb3 72 ♕g7) 72 ♕f1+ ♔b2 73 ♕e2+ ♔b1 74 ♕d1+ ♔b2 75 ♕d2+ ♔b1 76 ♕xb4 a1♕ 77 ♕e1+ and wins.

57 ♘f4+! ♔d6

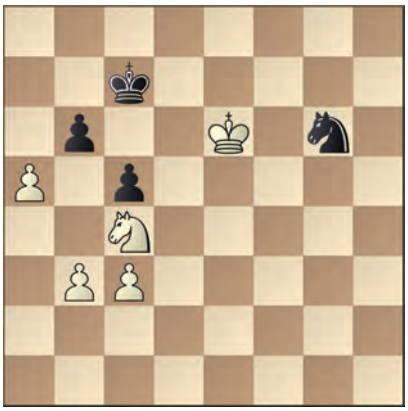
The king needs to be near to the pawns, so not 57...♔e5? 58 ♔c4! ♔xf4 (or 58...♘a7 59 ♘d5) 59 ♔b5 ♘b4 60 ♔xb6 ♘xc2 61 a5 ♘b4 62 ♔xc5 and wins.

58 ♔c4 ♘a7 59 ♘d5 ♔c6 60 ♘e7+ ♔d6 61 ♘f5+ ♔c6 62 ♔d3 ♔c7

62...b5! was a good idea to exchange off a pair of pawns. White can try 63 a5, but after 63...b4 64 ♔c4 ♘c8! Black is fine.

63 ♔e4 ♘c6 64 ♘e3 ♔d6 65 ♘c4+ ♔c7

66 c3 ♘e7 67 ♔e5 ♘g6+ 68 ♔f5 ♘e7+ 69 ♔e6 ♘g6 70 a5



70...b5?

A losing blunder.

Anand undoubtedly wanted to play 70...bxa5! 71 ♔d5 (71 ♘xa5 ♘f4+ 72 ♔e5 ♘e2 73 c4 ♔b6 holds) 71...♘f4+ 72 ♔xc5 ♘e2, but was presumably spooked by 73 ♘a3 when, of course, 73...♘xc3? loses to 74 ♘b5+, and if 74...♘xb5 75 ♔xb5 a4 76 ♔xa4 ♔c6 77 ♔a5. However, 73...♘c1! should hold (the tablebases give 73...♔b7 as the only other drawing move): 74 ♔c4 ♔b6 75 ♘c2 ♘e2 76 ♘d4 ♘f4 77 ♘f5 ♘e6 and Black 'holds', though in practice White would play a lot more moves before conceding the draw.

71 ♘e3 ♘f4+ 72 ♔e5 ♘e2 73 ♘d5+ ♔c6 74 b4 ♘xc3

A desperate attempt to muddy the waters, but one refuted immediately.

74...cxb4 75 cxb4 is winning, as the tablebases confirm: 75...♘c1 76 ♘e7+ ♔d7 77 ♔d5 ♘d3 78 ♘c6 ♔c7 79 ♔d4 ♘f2 80 ♔c5 ♘e4+ 81 ♔xb5 ♘d6+ 82 ♔c5 ♘e4+ 83 ♔d4!, etc.

75 ♘xc3 cxb4 76 ♘e2! 1-0

Since ♘d4(+)-b3 is coming, Black resigned. An epic battle in which Anand showed great resolve to equalise from a difficult position, but perhaps used up too much energy in the process and eventually succumbed.

Our next encounter was 'only' a blitz game, but by winning it in the final round Carlsen overtook Nakamura in the GCT event's blitz standings behind Vachier-Lagrave.

H.Nakamura-M.Carlsen
Abidjan (blitz) 2019
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 a6 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 6 e3 ♘f6 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 ♖c1 ♖d8 9 ♕c2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 c5 11 dxc5 ♕xc5 12 ♗d3 ♘c6 13 a3 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 15 ♘e4 ♗d7 16 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17 0-0 ♖ac8 18 ♕b1 ♖xc1 19 ♖xc1 g6 20 ♗e4 ♗b5 21 ♕c2 b6 22 g3 ♕e5 23 ♗f3 a5 24 h4 h6! 25 ♕c7 ♕xc7 26 ♖xc7 ♖d6

At first glance, this looks extremely equal, but Carlsen was able successfully to argue that his queenside pawns were less vulnerable than Nakamura's.

27 ♖b7?! A bad square. 27 b4 was better.

27...♔g7

After 27...a4 28 ♖a7 ♖d2 29 ♖b7 ♖xb2 30 ♖xb6 ♖b3 31 ♗d1 ♖b1 32 ♔h2 ♖xd1 33 ♖xb5 ♖d3 White should probably hold in theory, though it's certainly not nice with four against four on the kingside.

28 ♔g2 ♔f6

28...a4! was better at once because if 29 ♖a7 ♖d2 30 ♖b7 ♖xb2 wins with the king on g2, and if 31 ♖xb6? ♗f1+.

29 g4?! g5 30 hxg5+ hxg5 31 ♔g3 a4 32 ♗g2?

32 ♖a7 ♗e8 was correct, and not here 32...♖d2 33 ♖b7 ♖xb2? 34 ♖xb6 ♖b3? 35 ♗d1.

32...♗c4 Once Black gets in this and 33...b5, he is in business, even if it is still defensible.

33 ♗e4 b5 34 f4 e5

35 ♖c7?

Both losing a tempo and putting the rook on a worse square than b7 from where it was supported to check on the seventh rank.

After 35 ♔f3 exf4 (White also seems to obtain enough play after 35...♖d2, though the evaluation would be very difficult to get right in a game, especially in advance: 36 ♖b6+ ♔e7 37 ♖b7+ ♔d6 38 ♖b6+ ♔c7 39 ♖c6+ ♔b8 40 fxg5, and if 40...♖xb2 41 ♖c5 ♖b3 42 ♗d5 or 40...♔a7 41 ♖c5 ♔a6 42 ♖xe5 ♖xb2 43 ♗d5) 36 exf4 ♖d2 37 ♖b6+ ♔e7 (or 37...♔g7 38 f5 f6 39 ♖b7+ ♔f8 40 ♖b6 ♔e7 41 ♔e3 ♖xb2 42 ♔d4) 38 ♖b7+ ♔d6 39 ♖b6+ ♔c7 40 ♖b7+ ♔c8 41 fxg5 ♖xb2 42 ♖a7 ♖b3+ 43 ♔f4 ♖xa3 44 ♔e5 ♖e3 45 ♔d4 ♖e1 46 ♗c6 and with his pieces hyperactive and the black king on the ropes, White should be fine.

35...exf4+ 36 exf4 ♖d2 37 ♖c6+ ♔g7 38 fxg5

Likewise, after 38 f5 f6 and with the rook on c6 and the king one move further from the centre than if he'd played 35 ♔f3, White is in trouble.

38...♖xb2 39 g6 ♖b3+ 40 ♔f4 ♖xa3 41 gxf7 ♖a1 42 ♖c8 ♗xf7 43 ♖c7 a3

44 ♔g5 Instead, 44 ♗d5 ♖f1+ 45 ♔g5 ♔f8 46 ♖c8+ ♔e7 47 ♖c7+ ♔e8 wins easily enough. **44...♖d1 45 ♗c2 ♖c1! 0-1**

An impressively clean finish to a beautifully played blitz ending.

In the previous three examples, Carlsen showed his great skill in advantageous endings, but in our final game he had to pull out the stops to save himself. By doing so, he finished first in the Lindores Abbey tournament, whereas if he had lost then Ding would have taken overall victory.

Ding Liren-M.Carlsen
Lindores Abbey (rapid) 2019
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 a6 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 6 ♘bd2 ♘f6 7 g3 0-0 8 ♗g2 b6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♖c1 a5 12 ♖e1 c5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 e4 ♘xe4 15 ♘h4 ♕f6 16 ♘xe4 dxe4 17 ♖xc5 ♘a6 18 ♖xa5 ♕xb2 19 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♖ad8 21 ♖d5 ♖xd5 22 ♕xd5 ♘b4 23 ♕b3 ♕xb3 24 axb3

Things have gone badly wrong for Carlsen who is now in huge trouble.

24...♖b8 25 ♘f3 ♔f8 26 ♔f1 ♘d5 27 ♘d2 g6 28 ♖d4 ♘b4 29 ♔e2 ♔e7 30 ♖e4+ ♔d7 31 ♔e3 ♖b5 32 ♔d4 ♖d5+ 33 ♔c3 ♖d3+ 34 ♔xb4 ♖xd2

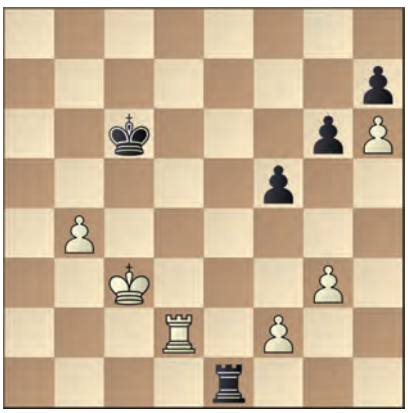
I haven't really thought about whether Ding could have done better in the last few moves. He surely thought that this was winning and he was right, but equally Carlsen must have been relieved to get the knights off the board. Like of all Carlsen's games, this was analysed live online by *Sesse*, Norwegian Steinar H. Gunderson's marriage of *Stockfish* and a super computer – see analysis.sesse.net. I've pulled some analysis from there and done the rest with the help of *Houdini*.

35 ♖f4 f5

Starting to restrict the white rook.

36 ♔c5

The immediate 36 h4! was better. An instructive line runs 36...♔d6 (36...h5 37 ♔c3 ♖e2 38 ♖d4+ ♔c6 39 ♖d2 ♖e1 40 f4 ♖g1 41 ♖d3 ♖e1 42 b4 also leaves Black in trouble, and if 42...♔b5 43 ♖d5+ ♔c6 44 ♖e5 or 42...♖e8 43 ♔c4 ♖e4+ 44 ♖d4 ♖e3 45 b5+ ♔c7 46 ♖d3) 37 ♔c3 ♖e2 38 b4 ♖e1 39 h5 ♖c1+ 40 ♔d4 ♖c2 41 ♖f3 ♖b2 42 ♔c3 ♖e2 43 ♖d3+ ♔c6 44 ♖d2 ♖e4 45 h6 ♖e1.



Hikaru Nakamura was another to feel the grinding force of the champ at his best.

Now 46 b5+! ♔c7 (46...♔xb5 47 ♖d7 ♔c6 48 ♖xh7 ♔d5 49 ♖h8 ♖e7 50 ♖g8 ♖h7 51 ♖xg6 ♔e4 52 ♔d2 ♔f3 53 ♔d3 ♖d7+ 54 ♔c4 ♔xf2 55 ♖g7 ♖d6 56 h7 ♖h6 57 ♔d4 ♔f3 58 ♔e5 is also winning) 47 ♖a2 ♔b8 48 ♔b4 ♔b7 49 ♔a5 f4 50 gxf4 ♖h1 51 ♖e2 ♖xh6 52 ♖e7+ (for some reason *Sesse*, a long way down a variation, liked 52 ♖e3 rather than 52...♖e7+, continuing 52...♔c8 53 ♔b6 ♖h1 54 ♖e7 ♖h3 55 ♖g7 ♖h1 56 ♖f7 ♔d8 57 ♔a7 ♔c8 58 ♖f8+ ♔d7) 52...♔c8 53 ♔a6 ♖h1 54 ♖e8+ ♔d7 55 ♖a8 ♖a1+ 56 ♔b7 ♖b1 57 b6 ♖b2 58 ♖h8 h5 59 ♖g8 ♖xf2 60 ♖g7+ ♔d8 61 ♖xg6 ♖xf4 62 ♖d6+ ♔e7 63 ♔c7 ♖f8 64 b7 h4 65 ♖h6 wins.

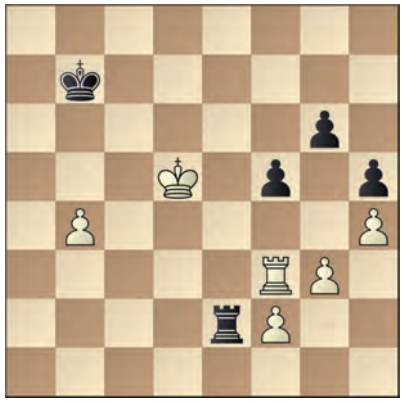
36...♔c7 37 b4 ♔b7?!

37...h5 was necessary immediately.

38 h4?!

After 38 ♖d4 ♖c2+ 39 ♔b5 ♖xf2 (39...h5 40 f4 h4 41 gxh4 ♖f2 also fails to save the day due to 42 h5 gxh5 43 h4 ♖f1 44 ♔c5 ♔c7 45 ♔d5 ♖e1 46 ♖c4+ ♔b7 – or 46...♔d7 47 b5 ♖b1 48 ♖c5 – 47 ♔d6 ♖e4 48 ♔c5 ♖e1 49 ♖d4 ♔c7 50 ♖d5) 40 ♖d7+ ♔c8 41 ♖xh7 f4 (if 41...g5 42 ♖h5 f4 43 ♖xg5) 42 gxf4 ♖xf4 43 h4! White is winning: for example, 43...♖e4 44 ♔a5 ♖e6 45 b5 ♔b8 46 ♖h6! ♖e4 47 ♔a6! (47 ♖xg6? ♖xh4 48 ♔a6 ♖h8 is only a draw) 47...♖a4+ 48 ♔b6 ♔c8 49 ♖xg6 ♖xh4 50 ♖g8+ ♔d7 51 ♔b7 and with Black's king on the long side of the pawn, he can't muster a single flank check and is dead lost, since White can easily advance the king and pawn to reach the Lucena position.

38...h5! 39 ♖f3 ♖c2+ 40 ♔d5 ♖e2



I believe that this is now drawn since the b-pawn is blockaded and White can't get the king towards the black pawns without making a concession or activate his rook successfully either.

41 ♔c5

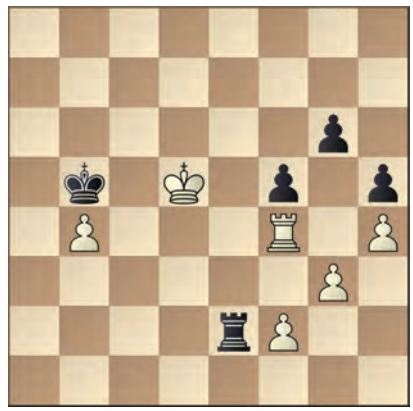
Alternatively:

a) 41 ♖c3 ♖xf2 42 ♔e5 ♔b6 43 ♔f6 f4 44 ♔xg6 ♖g2 45 ♖c5 ♖xg3+ 46 ♔xh5 f3 47 ♖f5 ♔c6 48 ♔h6 ♔b6 49 h5 ♔c6 50 ♔h7 ♔b6 51 h6 ♔c6 52 ♔h8 ♔b6 53 h7 ♔c6 54 ♖f8 ♔b6 55 ♖g8 ♖g2! holds.

b) 41 ♖d3 ♖xf2 42 ♔e5 ♔c7 43 b5 f4! 44 gxf4 ♖g2 45 ♖f3 ♖g4 46 f5 gxf5 47 ♖f4 ♔b6 48 ♔xf5 ♖g1 is also a draw.

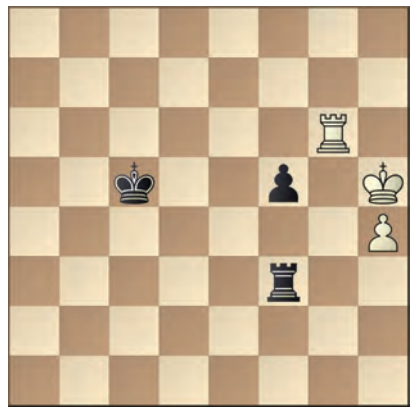
c) 41 ♔d4 ♖e4+ 42 ♔c3 (or 42 ♔d5 ♖e2 43 ♖c3 ♖xf2 44 ♔e5 f4 45 gxf4 ♖g2 46 ♖h3 ♖g4 47 ♔f6 when Black must find 47...♔b6 48 ♖f3 ♔b5 49 f5 gxf5 50 ♖xf5+ ♔b6! – 50...♔xb4? 51 ♖xh5 is winning – 51 ♖xh5 ♖xb4, which draws as *Shredder* confirms: 52 ♔g5 ♖c4 53 ♖h8 ♖c5+ 54 ♔g6 ♖c4 or 54...♖c6+) 42...♖e2 43 ♔d3 ♖b2 44 ♔e3 (or 44 ♖f4 ♔c6) 44...♖xb4 45 ♖f4 ♖b3+ 46 ♔d4 ♖b5 47 ♖f3 ♔c7 48 ♖a3 ♖b2 49 f4 ♖b6 50 ♔e5 ♔d7 51 ♖a7+ ♔e8 and Black again makes a draw.

41...♖c2+ 42 ♔d4 ♖e2 43 ♔d5 ♔b6 44 ♖f4 ♔b5



White is now unable to get at Black's kingside pawns with the king without allowing too much counterplay for it to be effective.

45 ♔d6 ♔b6 46 f3 ♔b5 47 ♔d5 ♖g2 48 ♔e5 ♖xg3 49 ♔f6 ♔a4 50 ♔g7 ♔b5 51 ♔h6 ♔a4 52 ♖d4 ♔b5 53 ♖d6 ♔xb4 54 ♖xg6 ♖xf3 55 ♔xh5 ♔c5

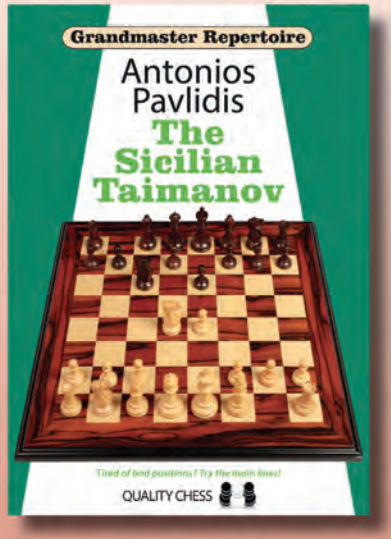


And with the black king in the vicinity of the f pawn, it's an easy draw. By this stage any decent player would hold, but earlier it was really tough and Carlsen's decision to use his king to stop the b-pawn and defend the whole kingside with the rook was very impressive.

56 ♖f6 ♔d5 57 ♔g6 ♔e5 58 h5 ♖g3+ 59 ♔f7 f4 60 h6 ♖h3 61 ♔g7 f3 62 ♖f8 ♖g3+ 63 ♔h8 ♔e4 64 h7 ♔e3 65 ♖xf3+ ♔xf3 ½-½

A brilliant defence by Carlsen who survived a position which almost anybody else in the world would have lost to Ding.

Take up the Taimanov with Quality Chess!



480 pages
Published on June 5th

The Sicilian Taimanov arises after the opening moves 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6, and is an ideal weapon for Black in the modern era. It is theoretically sound, and strikes a perfect balance between solidity and dynamic counterattacking potential, which makes it a popular choice among club players and top grandmasters alike.

GM Antonios Pavlidis is the ideal guide to this opening. A keen theoretician, he has been using the Taimanov as the backbone of his repertoire for many years. As a lifelong 1.e4 player, he is also adept at seeing the position from White's perspective, making his insight all the more valuable to the reader. In this book, Pavlidis shares top-class analysis as well as the expert knowledge he has gained from his many years of experience with the Taimanov.

Antonios Pavlidis is one of the brightest talents in Greek chess. He became a Grandmaster in 2014, at the age of 21. Amazingly, he has won the Greek Championship three times in three attempts, all before his 24th birthday.

When Boris Avrukh released his 1.d4 repertoire books in 2008 and 2010, they caused a sensation. GM Michael Adams remarked that *"The high-quality Grandmaster Repertoire series has taken this format to a completely different level."* Avrukh's newly revamped 1.d4 series has raised the bar even higher.

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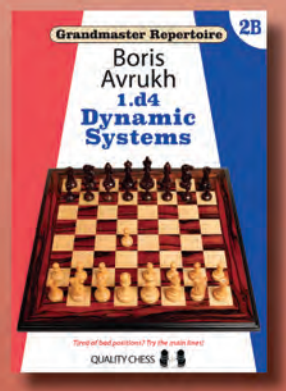
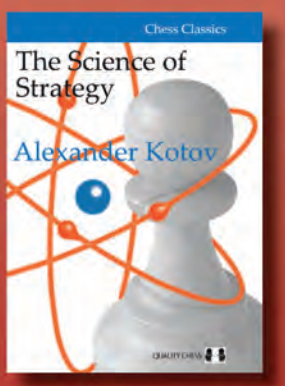


592 pages



240 pages

Chess is a strategically deep game and it is no surprise that players often struggle to find the right strategy over the board. Computers may be able to show a good move in a position, but they can't explain how it should fit into an overall plan.

Kotov's clear and methodical style makes **The Science of Strategy** an ideal guide to chess strategy. He describes the chess in words rather than relying overmuch on variations, and illustrates his ideas in insightfully annotated positional games, with the likes of Alekhine, Botvinnik and Karpov featuring heavily.

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How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King

Forgive the smug tone of 'I told you so' that runs through these lines but, last month, I mentioned two new stars of Russian chess, Vladislav Artemiev and Daniil Dubov. The former has just enjoyed a succession of victories in 2019; the latter won the World Rapid Championship at the end of December, though was lagging behind in classical chess. Roll forward to the FIDE Grand Prix tournament in Moscow in May and in the first round Dubov scored an upset by knocking out the world no.4 Anish Giri.

In their two-game mini match, the first was drawn, and Dubov won the second. It wasn't so much the result as the manner of this win that caught the imagination: a bold opening choice, then a seemingly random middlegame in which he walked a tightrope with his king before everything came together for a smashing conclusion.

Before his world championship match in November, Magnus Carlsen had invited Dubov to play a training match with him – a mark of respect from the world champion. Carlsen happened to be interviewed shortly after this game was played and was full of praise:

"Daniil comes up with unbelievable concepts and when he manages to follow those concepts up with energetic play then he's very, very good... I watched without computers, and for me almost every single move was a surprise; and I kept thinking, boy, is this guy good when he's on his game!"

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

D.Dubov-A.Giri
Moscow 2019
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♗g5

With this move Dubov is avoiding highly theoretical variations such as 4 ♘c3 dxc4 or 4...c6 5 ♗g5 dxc4. At this point Black could transpose into a standard QGD with 4...♗e7, but Giri decides to play the most principled move.

Dubov himself said, "This ♗g5 is a very interesting line which is considered to be a little overoptimistic. I spent about a week preparing this line. 4...dxc4 is considered to be some kind of an official refutation".

4...dxc4

Now recovering the pawn with 5 ♕a4+ is possible, but Black will be able to generate enough play after 5...♘bd7. This has been tested quite a lot in recent years by Mamedyarov.

5 e4

The sharpest move, thrusting forward boldly, but allowing Black to hold on to the pawn.

5...b5 6 a4

As usual in this kind of situation White puts pressure on Black's pawns and at the same time activates the queen's rook.

6...c6 7 ♘c3

We have transposed back into an old line of the Slav where the most common move for Black is 7...♕b6 and now the famous game Tal-Keller, Zurich 1959, continued 8 ♗xf6 gxf6 9 ♗e2 a6 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 d5... and the position exploded. Regardless of the objective merits of this line, it's worth asking, 'Whose king is safer?' – and that is a pertinent question in our main game too.

7...b4 8 ♘b1 ♗a6

Here 9 ♕c1 is the most common move, and also dangerous, but Dubov quickly played...

9 e5

...and soon had a thirty-minute time advantage on the clock. Giri was on his own in a treacherous swamp. To save the piece, Black's next move is forced.

9...h6

The test starts here.

10 ♗xf6

Three points. This is the best move.

If 10 ♗h4 (*one point*) 10...g5! 11 ♘xg5 hxg5 12 ♗xg5 ♕d5 13 ♗xf6 ♖g8 followed by ...♘d7 and Black has secured the central position with a huge lead in development.

10 exf6 hxg5 gives Black the two bishops, and the g-pawn could be useful in pushing away the knight.

Retreating the bishop down the diagonal to f4, e3, d2, or c1 will all be met by 10...♘d5 with a comfortable and strong position for Black.

10...gxf6

11 exf6

Two points.

I would have been tempted to develop my queenside before anything else: 11 ♘bd2 (*two points*). Black could play 11...fxe5, 11...c3, or 11...♕d5 and all bets are off!

11...c5

Giri is not backing down. He plays the most principled move, attacking White's centre. Naturally, neglecting development and leaving the pawn on f6 could have consequences.

Alternatively, 11...♕xf6 12 ♘bd2 c3 13 bxc3 bxc3 14 ♘e4 has been played in two previous games – with somewhat more orderly play than the game, but still hugely complicated.

12 ♘bd2

Two points. Only this. White has to bring this knight into play – as well as the bishop on f1.

Black has a much easier task after 12 dxc5 ♕xd1+ 13 ♔xd1 ♗xc5.

12...c3

After 12...♕xf6 White has the crafty 13 a5, enabling ♕a4+. Black has great practical difficulties to solve.

13 bxc3

One point. Another move without question.

13...bxc3

14 ♘e4

Two points. The knight had to move and

this is its best square, protecting f6, while attacking c5 and c3.

14...cxd4

15 ♗b5+

Four points. "I played ♗b5 mainly because I felt it was a good move" – Dubov.

I find this statement revealing. In such a complex position there is a tendency to calculate a vast number of variations in great depth. In fact, Dubov is playing largely on intuition. By checking on b5, and forcing an exchange on b5, Black's knight will find it difficult to get into the game and the a-file opens for the rook. As simple as that. 15 ♗b5+ is a highly ambitious move considering that there were a couple of safe alternatives.

15 ♗xa6 (*two points*) was also possible: 15...♘xa6 16 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 17 ♘xd4 ♘b4 is roughly level. Or if White wants to keep the position complex then 16 0-0 and Black has to tread carefully before reaching safety.

15 ♘xd4 (*two points*) is also a safe move, but 15...♕d5 is a good answer.

15...♗xb5

16 axb5

One point.

16...♕d5

I am sure that Giri would have preferred to play 16...♘d7, but 17 ♕xd4 leaves Black struggling to develop the bishop.

17 ♕xd4

Three points. The endgame is better for White – compare the development of both sides.

Dubov said afterwards that both he and Giri originally thought that 17 ♕d3 (*two points*) was best. Here is a plausible line: 17...♘d7 18 0-0 ♘c5 19 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 20 ♖fe1 ♗b6. Black still has to find a haven for his king, but for the moment his position is secure.

17...♕xb5

18 ♘xc3

One point. A good move, but there is better.

18 ♘e5 (*four points*) leaves Black struggling. For instance, 18...♘d7 19 ♖a5 ♕b1+ 20 ♔e2 ♕b2+ 21 ♔f3. White's king has reached safety, but Black's is still in the soup. Or 18...c2 19 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 20 ♕xd6 ♕b7 21 0-0. And 18...♕b4 19 ♖a4 ♕xd4 20 ♖xd4 is easy to play – ♔e2 and the rook sweeps over. Black's king is also not safe in the endgame.

World Rapid Champion Daniil Dubov knocked out Anish Giri in the opening round of the Moscow Grand Prix – and in quite some style. Creativity, not consistency, is Dubov's forte and he would be eliminated by Hikaru Nakamura after a rapid play-off in the next round.

18...♗b4

19 0-0-0

Five points. I'm giving the high score mainly for your cojones. Is this real? White's king has absolutely no pawn cover. Some of us might consider this at the board, but how many would actually play it? Dubov himself said: "I wasn't sure I was much better here. If I want to prove I'm better I have to play long castles".

He also thought he had a couple of ways to force a draw: for example, 19 ♘d2 (*two points*) 19...♗xc3 20 ♕xc3 ♘c6 21 ♘c4 ♕b4, with rough equality.

19 ♖d1 (*two points*) 19...♘d7 20 ♖d3 ♗xc3+ 21 ♖xc3 ♖g8 22 g3 ♖g6 is also roughly level.

19...♕a5

Defending against mate on d8. It is hard to criticise such a move when White's king is so exposed; but 19...♕b6 is stronger, and the endgame after 20 ♔c2 is roughly level.

20 ♘b5

Three points. "♘b5 looks very natural, but then it's a complete mess" – Dubov. He continues his bold play. White threatens to take the bishop, check on c7, and mate on d8.

20 ♖d3 (*two points*) is reasonable, when Black should offer to trade: 20...♕b6.

Alternatively, 20 ♘e4 allows Black to take over the attack: 20...♕c7+ 21 ♔b1 ♘c6; and 20 ♔c2 ♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 22 ♔xc3 ♘d7 is better for Black.

20...♘a6

21 ♕d7+

One point. A forced move. Instead, 21 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 22 ♕xd6 ♕c3+ is devastating.

21...♔f8

22 ♔b1

Four points. A move displaying remarkable sangfroid. "I didn't spend too much time calculating, I was just trying to convince myself it looks well; let's pray it works" – Dubov. A spot of calculation is necessary, however. For example, what about 22...♖b8? Before we go any further, perhaps you'd like to tell me what White should do now? Answer on the next line.

23 ♘e5 ♖h7 24 ♘c6 wins for White (*two bonus points*).

Instead of the game continuation, the immediate 22 ♘e5 gives us a clue as to why ♔b1 was played. Black wins with 22...♕a1+ 23 ♔c2 ♕a2+ 24 ♔c1 ♗a3+ 25 ♘xa3 ♕xa3+ 26 ♔d2 ♕b2+, picking up the loose knight on e5.

However, 22 ♖d4 (*three points*) was possible, when Black has step carefully. 22...♖h7 is ugly, but necessary, and anything could happen.

22...♗a3

The computer needle swings violently in White's favour after this move and instead it prefers 22...♗c5 – when White has a few responses: 23 ♘e5, 23 ♖d3 and 23 ♖d2, with an open game in all cases. I suppose if we were to make out a difference between 22...♗c5 and 22...♗a3, it is that from c5 the bishop covers d4, and that on a3 it is loose and soon must move again.

23 ♖d3

Four points. "I couldn't calculate everything. In general, I thought let's put all the pieces on light squares. I am just trying to stabilise the position" – Dubov. Stabilise the position! Bit late for that – but we know what he means. The rook controls some important squares and potentially allows its comrade in the corner to enter the game. Once again, note that Dubov is playing on intuition as much as calculation.

23 ♖d4? would allow 23...♖b8 24 ♔c2 ♘b4+ 25 ♔d1 ♘d5 and the knight recentralises.

Dubov thought that 23 ♘xa3 should probably end in a draw. First, we should say that 23...♕xa3?? allows 24 ♕d8+ and mate; therefore 23...♖b8+ 24 ♔c1 ♕xa3+ 25 ♔d2 ♔g8. Neither king has quite reached safety, but they are both somewhat more secure than before. I would not describe this position as a 'draw' – it can still go horribly wrong for either side.

23...♕b4+

Instead, 23...♖b8 would be met by 24 ♖b3 and White is safe enough.

24 ♔c2

One point. Alternative king moves would be sub-optimal.

24...♕a4+

24...♕b2+ 25 ♔d1 ♕xf6 26 ♘xa3 ♔g7 might offer Black some compensation for the piece until you realise that 27 ♕d4 spoils all the fun.

25 ♔d2

One point. Instead, 25 ♔b1 would merely repeat; and cover yourself in shame for 25 ♖b3?? ♕xb3+.

25...♗b4+

26 ♔e2

One point. Having staggered back into the middle, the king finds more security around its pieces. 26 ♔e3 would run into 26...♗c5+ and it's still not quite clear.

26...♔g8

26...♕c2+ would be met by 27 ♘d2, allowing the rook to swing across to g3, for example, in variations like this: 27...♔g8 28 ♘c3 ♗xc3 29 ♖g3+ ♔f8 30 ♕e7 checkmate.

27 ♘e5

Three points. Dubov starts to take over the initiative. In fact White's position is so good that there is more than one strong continuation. The *same score* for either 27 ♖c1 or 27 ♖hd1 – both very practical moves considering that they enable the king to slip back to f1 with complete safety.

27...♕c2+

28 ♔f3

Two points. Instead, 28 ♔f1 (*one point*) followed by g3 and ♔g2 is slower, but once White coordinates he will be winning as Black will be unable to bring his king's rook into play: 28...♖h7 29 g3 ♗c5 30 ♘d4 ♕b2 31 ♔g2.

28...♖f8

29 ♖hd1

Three points. In this chaotic position, making a solid developing move that coordinates the rooks is attractive.

There are many good moves here. The one that I especially like, because it also coordinates, is 29 ♘d4 (*three points*). Black's queen is pushed to a poor square: for example, 29...♕b2 30 ♘dc6 ♘c5 31 ♕d4 ♕xd4 32 ♖xd4 a5 33 ♖g4+ ♔h7 34 ♖g7 checkmate. Not forced, but a plausible variation nonetheless.

Three points for 29 ♖a1 and 29 ♕d4 as well.

29...h5

30 ♕d4

Four points. White had to be careful as Black was threatening a knight fork on c5.

30...♖h7

31 ♕f4

Two points. Heading towards the king. The finale is in sight. The *same score* for 31 ♕h4.

31...♗c5

32 ♘d4

Two points. There is something very attractive about bringing the knight back into the fold. Simply by coordinating, White emphasises his overwhelming superiority over Black.

The *same score* for 32 ♖1d2 with this variation in mind: 32...♕b1 33 ♕g5+ ♔h8 34 ♖d8 ♕xb5 35 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 36 ♘g6+ followed by taking the queen. It seems that all the tactics are working against Black.

32 ♕g5+ ♔h8 33 ♖1d2 (*two points*) transposes to the above.

32...♕a2

33 ♖1d2

Two points. Covering the f2-pawn. The *same score* for 33 ♘e2, as well as 33 ♕g5+ ♔h8 34 ♘e2.

33...♕d5+

34 ♔e2

One point. 34 ♔g3 is also possible, but it feels more natural to leave the third rank open for the rook.

Compare White's solid block of pieces to Black's pitiful forces, scattered around the board.

34...♗b4

35 ♘dc6

Three points. Now that coordination has been achieved, it is time to move in for the kill. If 35...♗xd2 36 ♕xd2 leads to mate (if one calculates well), or one could simply win the queen: 36 ♕g3+ ♔h8 37 ♖xd5.

35 ♘df3 (*three points*) is also strong.

35...♕c5

If 35...♕b5 36 ♕g5+ ♔h8 37 ♘xf7+ and ♕xb5.

36 ♘e7+

Two points.

36...♔h8

This was the final move of the game, Giri resigning (**1-0**) without waiting for Dubov's next move – but I'm not going to be so trusting. How would you finish the game?

It's mate in three after 37 ♘xf7+ ♖fxf7 38 ♖d8+ ♖f8 39 ♖xf8 mate; or 37...♖hxf7 38 ♕h6+ ♖h7 39 ♕xf8 mate. *Three points* if you calculated these variations.

With hindsight and engines, all is clear, but Dubov admitted that even late into the game he wasn't sure whether he was winning. He said afterwards, "It was one of those games that make us love chess. The only problem is that somebody has to qualify; otherwise we would just enjoy playing this very weird position".

Now add up your points:

0-17	Unlucky
18-35	Average Club Player
36-44	Strong Club Player
45-50	FIDE Master
51-60	International Master
61-71	Grandmaster

Ed. – If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.

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July 6-14 **Scottish Championships, Edinburgh**
www.scottishchesschamp.co.uk

July 6-7 **Basingstoke U2200 Congress**
www.gmchess.co.uk/summer-fide-congress.html

July 6 **South Shields Blitz**
www.southshieldschessclub.co.uk

July 7 **Ashton-under-Lyne Rapidplay**
www.ashtonccc.co.uk or call 0161 339 3287

July 8-14 **South Wales International, Bridgend**
www.southwaleschess.co.uk

July 13-14 **Weald Congress, Copthorne**
www.wealdchesscongress.org.uk

July 13 **Golders Green Rapidplay**
goldersgreenchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

July 19-21 **4NCL Congress, Telford**
www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_22.htm or call 01993 708645

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www.glorneycupchess.org; also a rapidplay and IM norm event

July 20 **Poplar Rapidplay**
www.spanglefish.com/docklandschessclub

July 23 **Muswell Hill Rapidplay**
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www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk

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June 24 - July 9 **Grand Chess Tour, Zagreb**
grandchesstour.com; Carlsen, Caruana, Giri, Nakamura, So, MVL, etc

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Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs - by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

I was chatting to a friend and team-mate recently about our chess season and what we thought we needed to do to improve for next year. I am no spring chicken, and my friend is even older than me. Aren't older people supposed to get weaker? Well our grades in the last few years have actually steadily risen a little. We agree that this could be attributed to hard work and playing as regularly as we could. We both agreed that we play more aggressive chess now than when we were younger. Why is that? Perhaps the older we get, the more we understand that we have less time. In this respect, what we do with the time we have left is crucial.

We still have the passion for the game, and the drive to improve – but how? I personally feel that as well targeting study in terms of quality not quantity, one can learn a great deal from simply observing stronger players play – especially so if they are friends who are happy to talk you through some of the ideas and themes. I am lucky to have FM James Jackson (soon to be an IM) in my club team and as a friend, but also living not too far away is another friend in Marcus Harvey, also a very strong FM. I knew Marcus when we were both at Bicester Chess Club and he was knee high to a grasshopper, and already a precocious talent.

I decided to invite both of these fine gentlemen to my house for a night of chilli, beer (or otherwise), and chess. They were both up for it and we agreed upon an informal evening of blitz chess with a two-second increment per move. I would play only now and again throughout the evening, but basically take some photographs with my new camera, and simply enjoy watching their games. If they were really well behaved, I might stretch to some kind of pudding!

Now I think I am a reasonable chess player, and I have had some decent results in my day, but it quickly became clear how wide the gulf was between their understanding and mine with regards to the game of chess. Before I get to that, let me just begin with Marcus and show you how devious and dangerous he can be at the chess board. I must add that he is the opposite of this when the clocks are stopped. This proves that a person's chess style is not necessarily a reflection of their character in real life.

In 2012 I organised a simultaneous exhibition in Banbury and GM Nigel Short was our esteemed visitor. He was extremely charitable in agreeing to have someone as strong as Marcus playing. Nigel had a lot of boards to play, so slipping up against Marcus was in no way an embarrassment. Marcus plays the French Defence quite a bit. I am giving nothing away – this can all be seen on the databases. They arrived at this position with Nigel as White to play.

Rather naturally it would seem, Nigel played **19 ♖xd8?** which loses immediately. Can you see why? If you found **19...♘b3+!**, then well done to you. Both 20 ♔b1 and 20 axb3 lose. Let us look closer: 20 ♔b1 e3+ means that White must give up his queen; and 20 axb3 fails to 20...♕a5+! 21 ♔b1 e3+ when again the queen must interpose and subsequently die in battle.

Marcus is deadly at tactics and always has been. He can spot a tactic from a mile away and ruthlessly exploits any weakness in the opponent's position. I still do not like getting beaten by him, FM or not, but he isn't that beatable kid any more, and in any case I learn so much from his games. Fair play.

And what of James? Well, I sit next to or near to him in many of our club matches. The pressure is always on him to win, which he so often does – to secure much needed points for the team. But chess wins are not given; they are earned regardless of the strength of the opposition.

In my view, whilst James also clearly excels at tactics, he is a fine positional player. He is happy to be patient, build up his position and then strike. Look on the databases and you'll see that his games are generally longer than Marcus's. James has a wonderful feel for what kind of position he is aiming for much further on from the one in front of him. That's a skill that any aspiring master must have.

James so often brings home the bacon in the endgame and just knows where the pieces are meant to go in that aspect of the game. It's always a pleasure to watch and sometimes I try to figure out what move he might play next – on occasion at the expense of concentrating on my own game. In that sense James is very bad for my game!

James plays logical, efficient and effective chess. Here with White against Franssen in Reykjavik back in 2016 he finished very nicely.

James played **11 ♗xh7+! ♔xh7 12 ♘g5+ ♗xg5 13 ♕xh5+ ♗h6** and then **14 ♗xh6 gxh6 15 ♖f6** in a style that reminds me of the kind of rook blocking moves that no less than Bobby Fischer used to play.

It would be wrong of me to publicly state who won more games or what openings were used on that evening at my house, but let us say there were many interesting games and wins from both parties. I would call it the night of the tactician and the strategist. It struck me that neither James nor Marcus would ever set their stall out for a draw (why would they?), and both wanted to play the best moves that they could find. That sounds obvious, but what I mean is they would not simply play an 'obvious' move that might seal a game, but instead look again to see if there was an even better way. I liked that. The two-second increment ensured that the games often went right to the wire so I could observe and relish their endgame play.

Carl invited two very strong English FMs to his house for an evening of blitz. Marcus Harvey (left) of Witney Chess Club is already rated over 2400, while James Jackson has played for all of Leamington Spa, Solihull and Barbican 4NCL in the past season while reaching 2389.

Some of the games were beyond my own understanding, but the chatter between the two protagonists confirmed that they were playing not just on the board, but in the deep recesses of their minds too. Some of their positions were ridiculous. I mean take a look at this one with Black to play.

I could see from the clock that there was limited time to play this position, but both James and Marcus laughed aloud as they admitted that even they had no idea what was going on. With no pressure of serious competition, both players were free to express themselves and they certainly did that.

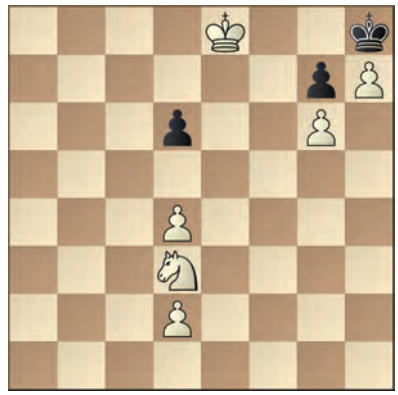
I recall thinking that two of the bishops were *en prise* and asking myself what was that king doing on c5. Queens are off, so he is free to fight. Honestly speaking, I was so wrapped up in it all I cannot even recall what the result was, but I did take the liberty of letting the new *Komodo 13* (available from Chess & Bridge!) have a look at the position and the conclusion seems to be that it is roughly level if Black plays 1...♗xa4. You knew that already, right?

I did say that I played a few games. On two occasions I tried a couple of dastardly tricks against Marcus, but he saw through them. What I liked was the fact that both he and James appreciated how devious I had been to set the traps, but, of course, they were just too strong to fall into them. I also like that they both encouraged me to find the best moves; they wanted me to do well. You don't see that so often nowadays.

At one point I was playing a game and we got to an ending with just kings and pawns left. I moved my king towards one side, hoping to pick up some pawns. As I said earlier, I think I am a reasonable player, have an idea what I am doing, and here my policy was pretty obvious. It was fascinating to note that both Marcus and James said almost in unison: "Why are you playing that?"

It was clear to them that there was another more obvious strategy to play the endgame and mine was not the right one. They both asked me why I was going to pick up the pawns now when I could do so later in the game – that there was another more pressing matter to deal with first, such as ensuring the king was on the correct square in the centre of the board. What was so obvious to me, was also so obvious to them – but we did not share the same obvious. That's one of the big the differences between amateurs and masters.

At one point in the night we decided to look at a few chess problems. Again, their insight was very valuable. I showed them a position that I had recently found and presented to friends of my own chess playing strength. Yes, they found the answer, but not instantly. This applied also to the juniors that I showed the position to. I know you would like to have a go too, dear reader, so here is the position.



It is White to play and win. I shall let you solve it without a chess engine. Put the kettle on and enjoy it. You can find the answer on page 54.

Both James and Marcus found the answer fairly quickly, having seen several moves ahead, one of which was critical. I think the pattern of the position, in particular the position of the black king, influenced the speed of their decision. They instinctively knew what to look for, which is yet another skill in the chess master toolbox.

Chess being chess, we burned some more midnight oil and stayed up until around 2am. James and Marcus bade their farewells and disappeared into the night. As I tidied up before my own visit to the land of nod, I recall asking myself what I had learned. My conclusion was that although I will never be as strong as these two, that could never diminish my own love of the game.

No matter who we are, from beginner to grandmaster, chess gives us what we allow it to. It is our game, our passion, our journey. They say that interest is where you find it. Well then, let the same be said for enjoyment

Tragedy on Board

Chess tragedies can be quite fun to watch, as Amatzia Avni demonstrates

Interviewed in the January issue, Harriet Hunt said that chess "Fills one with happiness and self-disgust in pretty equal measures", and that "Your entire self-esteem depends usually on how you played in your last game, so you can destroy yourself with one or two rash decisions."

That is quite correct, of course. With all the happy moments that chess may grant, unavoidably it occasionally causes a great deal of pain. People are fond of drama, so it is quite instructive to watch tragedies on the chessboard – so long as they don't happen to *us*.

A common form of tragedy is spoiling a good game, turning victory into misery.

H.Golombek-T.Popa
Warsaw Olympiad 1935
English Opening

1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 e5 3 ♘f3 ♘c6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♘xd4 d6 6 ♘xc6 bxc6 7 g3 ♗e7 8 ♗g2 ♕d7 9 ♕d4 ♗b7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖d1 ♖fd8 12 ♗g5 ♕e8 13 ♖d3 ♘d7 14 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 15 ♖e3 ♕f8 16 ♕h4 ♘b6 17 b3 ♖e8 18 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 19 ♖d1 ♕d7 20 ♘e4 ♕e6 21 ♖d3 h6 22 ♖e3 ♕d7 23 ♕h5 ♖f8?

White has played strongly and following Black's error he now transforms his positional superiority into a winning attack.

24 ♘f6+! gxf6 25 ♗h3 ♕d8 26 ♖e4 f5 27 ♗xf5?

27 ♕xh6! wins at once, as if 27...fxe4 28 ♗f5 mates.

27...♕f6 28 ♖g4+ ♔h8

29 ♗g6?

All part of his plan, but...

29...♕xf2+! 0-1

Tragedy is enhanced when a chance to win against a Big Name or someone in the process of becoming one is spoilt, as in the next two examples.

J.Krejcik-S.Tartakower
Vienna 1906
Three Knights Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 g6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗g7 6 ♗e3 d6 7 ♗b5 ♗d7 8 0-0 ♘ge7 9 f4 0-0 10 ♗c4 ♔h8 11 f5 gxf5 12 exf5 ♘xd4 13 ♗xd4 ♘xf5 14 ♗xg7+ ♘xg7 15 ♗xf7 ♕e7 16 ♘d5 ♕e5 17 ♕d2 ♗f5 18 ♖ae1 ♕xb2 19 ♖e7 c6 20 ♘e3 ♕f6 21 ♘xf5 ♘xf5??

21...♖xf7 22 ♖xf7 ♕xf7 23 ♘xd6 favours White, but the text is an outright blunder.

22 ♖xf5!

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And wins, or at least should have won easily. Both rooks are taboo on account of 23 ♕c3+, so White remains a piece ahead. Here we have Joseph Krejcik, an average Austrian master, in a glorious moment of his career about to achieve victory against the young but already strong Tartakower...

22...♕g7 23 ♕xd6 ♖ad8 24 ♖d7 ♕a1+

25 ♖f1?? Ouch. 25 ♔f2 wins. **25...♕xf1+!**
26 ♔xf1 ♖xf7+ The tears may flow.
27 ♖xf7 ♖xd6 28 ♖xb7 ♖d2
And Black managed to draw.

R.Tomczak-V.Anand
Lugano Open 1988
Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘xd4

♗c5 5 ♘b3 ♗b6 6 a4 a6 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 ♗e2 d6 9 a5 ♗a7 10 0-0 h6 11 ♔h1 0-0 12 f4 ♖e8 13 ♗f3 ♗e6 14 ♖a4 ♕d7 15 ♖e1 ♘g4 16 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 17 ♕d3 f5 18 ♗d2 fxe4 19 ♖axe4 ♖xe4 20 ♘xe4 ♗f5 21 c4 ♕f7 22 ♗c3 ♘e7 23 ♕g3 ♗g6 24 ♘bd2 ♘f5 25 ♕d3 ♖e8? 26 g4 ♘e7 27 f5 ♗h7 28 ♘f6+!

A surely decisive blow.

28...gxf6 29 ♘e4 ♔f8 30 ♘xf6 ♖d8? 31 ♕d2 ♘g8 32 ♘xg8 ♔xg8 33 ♕xh6 ♖d7 34 ♕g5+ ♔f8

The 1987 junior world champion is going down in flames. After 35 ♕h6+ ♔g8 36 ♖e6 he is bound to resign, but...

35 ♖e6?? ♕xe6! 0-1

White had tragically overlooked 36 fxe6 ♗e4#.

Another source of pain is missing a beautiful win.

M.Schoeneberg-V.Tukmakov
Zinnowitz 1967
Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6 3 ♘f3 d6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♘f6 6 g4 ♘c6 7 g5 ♘d7 8 ♗e3 ♗e7 9 ♖g1 a6 10 ♕d2 0-0 11 0-0-0 ♘xd4 12 ♗xd4 b5 13 f4 b4 14 ♘a4 e5 15 ♗e3 exf4 16 ♗xf4 ♕a5 17 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 18 ♕xd6 ♕xa4 19 ♗c4

With the aid of a daring sacrifice, which was admittedly not entirely correct, White has devised a strong attack.

19...♕a5 20 g6 ♕c5? 21 gxf7+ ♔h8 22 ♕h6!! ♕e5

22...gxh6? 23 ♖g8+ mates.

23 ♖d3?

23 ♖d6!! would have won brilliantly: for example, 23...♗b7 24 ♖dg6! ♗xe4 25 ♖xg7 ♘f6 26 ♕xf6!.

23...♕f6 24 ♕xf6 ♘xf6 25 ♖dg3?

25 e5 would still have left White with some advantage, but the glorious moment has passed and after more errors he even lost:

25...♘h5 26 ♖g5 ♘f4 27 ♖xg7 ♗e6 28 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 29 ♖7g4 ♖xf7 30 e5 a5 31 ♖c4 ♖f5 32 ♖e1 ♔g7 33 ♖c6 ♔f7 34 ♖b6 ♖a7 35 c3 ♖c7 36 ♖e3 ♖f1+ 37 ♔d2 ♖f2+ 38 ♔c1 ♖xh2 39 ♖f3+ ♔e7 40 ♖a6 ♘d4 41 ♖e3 ♘e2+ 42 ♔d2 ♘xc3+ 43 ♔d3 ♘d1 0-1

B.Savchenko-V.Ivanchuk
Turkish Team Championship 2016

Black has just played 29...♗f8-c5+.

30 ♗e3? ♕h1+ 31 ♔f2 ♖d2+ 32 ♖e2 ♘e4+ 0-1

It is always a sorry affair to miss a save, but to miss a brilliancy doubles the pain. White could have saved half a point in style with 30 ♕xc5!! ♕h1+ 31 ♔f2 ♕xh2+ 32 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 33 ♔g1 ♘g4...

Vassily Ivanchuk was also tactically alert en route to an eighth victory in Cuba recently.

...34 ♕f8+!! ♖xf8 35 ♘g6+ ♔h7 36 ♘xf8+ and it's perpetual check.

Next we witness tragedy inflicted by mishandling the clock, preventing one reaping the fruits of some excellent play.

B.Ivanovic-M.Cebalo
Yugoslav Championship, Budva 1986
Classical Sicilian

19...♘xb3 20 ♕d3!

A spectacular move. Instead of recapturing, White continues with his attack, eyeing g6 and h7.

20...♘c5 21 ♕xg6+

If 21 ♗xc5 ♕c6!, but even better was 21 ♖xh7! ♖xh7 22 ♕xg6+ ♖g7 23 ♕h5.

21...♖g7 22 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 23 ♖xh7+ ♔g8

Dodging 23...♔g6? 24 ♖3h6+ ♔f5 25 ♖f7+ ♗f6 26 ♖fxf6+ ♔g4 27 h3#.

24 ♖h8+ ♔f7 25 ♖3h7+ ♔g6 26 ♖h6+ ♔f5

27 ♖8h7! ♗d8

27...♗xg5 was a better defence.

28 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 29 ♖f6+ ♔g4 30 g6 ♗b7 31 ♖f7 ♗b6 32 b4 ♘a4 33 ♘xa4 ♗xe3 34 fxe3 0-1

Tragically in this winning position, White overstepped the time limit.

A case when the opponent didn't do anything, but it is us who managed to self-destruct is particularly hard to swallow.

Y.Kosashvilli-I.Bitensky
Israel (rapid) 1999

1 ♗d3+ ♘e4+?? 2 ♔e2!

White wins a piece, without even intending to.

2...f3+??

Dropping another half a point. 2...♔g5 3 ♗xe4 ♔h4 would still have drawn.

3 ♔e3

And White went on to win.

Voluntarily entering a losing position after analysing it is another experience from hell.

Malmberg-Nordstrom
correspondence 1964

1 ♖f7+ ♔g5??

A dreadful oversight in a correspondence game. 1...♔e5 would have given Black winning chances.

2 h4+ ♔h5 3 ♖f5+! 1-0

Mate follows.

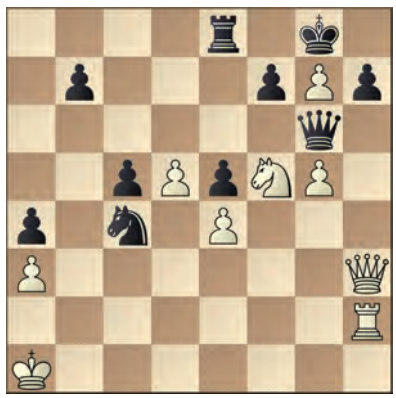
Predestined tragedy is also awful to watch. As excellent a player as Hikaru Nakamura undoubtedly is, whatever the position he reaches against Magnus Carlsen, you can bet that something nasty will often happen to him.

H.Nakamura-M.Carlsen
Zurich 2014
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 f3 d5 5 a3 ♗e7 6 e4 dxe4 7 fxe4 e5 8 d5 ♗c5 9 ♗g5 0-0 10 ♘f3 ♗g4 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♕xf3 ♘bd7 13 0-0-0 ♗d4 14 ♘e2 c5 15 g4 a5 16 ♔b1 ♖a6 17 ♘g3 g6 18 h4 a4 19 ♖h2 ♕a5 20 ♗d2 ♕c7 21 g5 ♘e8 22 h5 ♖b6 23 ♗c1 ♖b3 24 ♕g4 ♘b6 25 ♗e2 ♘d6 26 ♖dh1 ♗xb2 27 ♗xb2 ♘bxc4 28 ♗xc4 ♘xc4 29 hxg6

White's attack breaks through first.

29...♕b6 30 g7 ♖d8 31 ♕h4 ♖xb2+ 32 ♔a1 ♖xh2 33 ♖xh2 ♕g6 34 ♘f5 ♖e8 35 ♕g4 ♕b6 36 ♕h3 ♕g6



37 d6?

White falls into the only trap. Instead, 37 ♕f1 or 37 ♖h1 among others would have been decisive.

37...♘xd6! 38 ♘xd6 ♖d8 39 ♘c4

After 39 ♘f5? ♖d1+ Black will deliver mate.

39...♕xe4 40 ♕h5 ♖d3 41 ♖h4 ♕f5 42 ♕e2 b5 43 ♘d2 ♕xg5 44 ♕xd3 ♕xh4 45 ♘e4 ♔xg7 46 ♕f3 ♕f4 47 ♕g2+ ♔f8 48 ♔b2 h5 49 ♘d2 h4 50 ♔c2 b4 51 axb4 cxb4 52 ♕a8+ ♔g7 53 ♕xa4 h3 54 ♕b3 h2 55 ♕d5 e4 56 ♕h5 e3 57 ♘f3 e2 58 ♔b3 f6 59 ♘e1 ♕g3+ 60 ♔a4 ♕g1 61 ♕xe2 ♕a7+ 0-1

Finally, here is a case where nobody is to blame. In the following study, the composer made no error.

Tigran Gorgiev
Shakhmaty vs USSR 1929

White to play and win

This charming study will be familiar to many readers.

1 ♗f6+ ♔h7 2 ♖g7+ ♔h6!

And not 2...♔h8? 3 ♖xe7+.

3 ♖f7 ♔g6!

The best try. White wins easily after 3...♘c6 4 ♗xd8 ♘xd8 5 ♖d7 ♘e6 6 ♖d6 and 3...♔h5 4 ♗xe7 ♔g6 5 ♖f6+.

4 ♖f8 ♘c6! 5 ♗xd8 ♔g7 6 ♖e8 ♔f7 7 ♖h8 ♔g7 8 ♗f6+! ♔xf6 9 ♖h6+ ♔e7 10 ♖xc6

And finally White is a whole rook to the good.

However, when the six-piece tablebases came out, it became apparent that simply 1 ♔e2! is also winning (if 1...♘c6 2 ♗f2! ♔h7 3 ♔f3), and that on the second move 2 ♔e2! wins in the long run as well. Hence the study was cooked.

The composer had committed no error, since at the time when the study was composed, almost all positions of rook and bishop against bishop and knight were considered to be a simple draw.

Fortunately, as we are dealing with a study, not a game, all was not lost. Indeed, several attempts have been made in recent years to save this masterpiece. The best is probably the following.

1 ♖g7+ ♔h6 2 ♖f7! ♔g6! 3 ♖f8, etc.

Thus, a temporary tragedy ended on a happy note.

Overseas News

CHINA – It was possibly a case of one tournament too many for Gawain Jones at the IMSA World Masters in Hengshui (14-19 May), although he was the bottom seed in a strong rapid event. Anton Korobov (UKR) won that with an impressive 8½/11, finishing a point and a half clear of both Le Quang Liem (VIE) and Leinier Dominguez Perez (USA). In the ensuing blitz tournamentJones scored five points more than he managed in the rapid, while the blitz was won by home star Bu Xiangzhi with 14½/22, who finished a point ahead of Korobov.

CUBA – Vassily Ivanchuk chalked up his eighth victory at the Capablanca Memorial in Havana (3-13 May). We'll have a full report next time from Jose Vilela.

DENMARK – Glasgow student Svetlana Sucikova continued her recent run of form and only missed out on a WIM norm by half a point at the Fredericia WIM tournament (29 May - 2 June), where she finished on 6/9, a point behind Poland's Anna Kubicka.

FRANCE – David Howell was the top seed at the Balagna Rapid Open (18-19 May), and conceded just the one draw as he racked up 8½/9. That only qualified Howell for the semi-final stage where he defeated the young French star Marc Andria Maurizzi ahead of overcoming Irish IM Alex Lopez in the final.

Sponsored by GRENKE no less, Bischwiller triumphed once again in the gruelling French Team Championship in Brest (18-28 May). Their squad contained Maxim Rodshtein, Markus Ragger, Arkadij Naiditsch, Etienne Bacrot, Romain Edouard, Laurent Fressinet, Jean-Pierre le Roux, Marie Sebag and Nino Maisuradze, with 8 players taking part in each match. Bischwiller defeated Maxime Vachier-Lagrave's team Asnières 4½-3½, the Parisian side having to settle for the silver medals as MVL finished with 3½/5, including a model win with the Ruy Lopez over Bassem Amin.

RUSSIA – The 15th Top Chess Engine Championship (TCEC) was once again hosted by the Russian website Chessdom and took place between March and May. *Leela* and *Stockfish* qualified from the Premier Division, as the tournament saw the first ever TCEC win by a neural-network engine, *Leela* winning the resulting Superfinal +14 -7 =79.

The Russian Team Championships in Sochi (1-10 May) were as strong as ever. St. Petersburg-based Bronze Riders (Vitiugov, Dominguez Perez, Matlakov, Rodshtein, Najer, etc) retained their title, as they conceded just one draw while winning 8 matches to finish two points clear of Moscow's ShSM Legacy Square Capital. Valentina Gunina top-scored for Yugra with 7/8 as they won the women's competition, albeit only on board points from SShOR, who actually won their individual match.

SWEDEN – As we noted last month, Gawain Jones had an excellent result as he triumphed ahead of top seed Pentala Harikrishna at the TePe Sigeman & Co tournament in Malmo (3-9 May). After outplaying Parham Maghsoodloo in the complications in the opening round, as we saw in last month's Editorial, Jones also defeated Ivan Saric and Tiger Hillarp Persson. The former game saw Jones coordinate his two rooks and bishop to weave a mating net around the exposed black king late in the middlegame; the latter was a controlled crush.

T.Hillarp Persson-G.Jones
Malmo 2019
English Opening

1 c4 c5 2 ♘c3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 d6 6 0-0 e6 7 a3 ♘ge7 8 ♖b1 0-0 9 b4 b6 10 e3 ♗b7 11 ♕b3 ♖b8 12 ♗b2 ♕d7 13 d3 h6 14 ♖fe1?!

Both sides have developed along sensible lines thus far and now 14 ♖fd1 looks sensible, and if 14...g5 15 ♘e2 followed by breaking in the centre.

14...g5!

Black's set-up might be harmonious and solid, but that doesn't mean that he can't look to attack.

15 ♘e2 e5 16 ♖bd1

16 ♕a4 is the engines' suggestion, but after 16...a6 White might even grow worried about ...b5 ideas.

16...♘g6 17 d4

A classical reaction to Black's play, but one that Jones was more than ready for.

17...g4!?

There was nothing wrong with 17...e4 18 ♘d2 f5, but Jones prefers to grab a pawn, having spotted a trap hidden deeply in the position.

18 ♘d2 exd4 19 exd4 cxd4 20 ♘e4?

Falling in with Black's scheme. 20 f4! gxf3 21 ♘xf3 would have been a much better defence and still about equal.

20...♖be8

The right rook, as the one on f8 will join the fray after ...f5.

21 ♘xd4?

White was already in trouble, but regaining the pawn so will pretty much cost him the game.

21...♘xd4 22 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 23 ♖xd4 f5!

Everything works for Black, who is about to obtain far too much for his queen as his superior coordination claims the day.

24 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 25 ♘xd6 ♖xe1+ 26 ♗f1 ♘e5 27 c5+ ♔h7 28 f4 ♘f3+ 29 ♔f2 ♖xf1+!

Finishing crisply.

30 ♔e3 ♖e1+ 31 ♔f2 ♖e2+! 0-1

Britain's busiest professional chess player, Gawain Jones, who triumphed at the Sigeman in Malmo ahead of popping over to China.

Home News

AYR – IM Andrew Greet was defeated by FM Hamish Olson at the Ayr Congress (24-26 May), but caught up his conqueror after Olson was held to two draws on the final day.
Open: 1-2 Andrew Greet (Bearsden), Hamish Olson 4/5, 3-5 Robert Lothian (both Aberdeen), Stephen Mannion (Paisley), Alan Jelfs (East Kilbride) 3½.
Major: 1-2 William Clinton (Livingston), Paul Doherty (Bolton) 4, 3-4 Ian West, Keith Aitchison (Edinburgh) 3½.
Minor: 1 Dave Watson (Corstophine) 4½, 2-4 Sarah Smith (Ayr), Alex Waddell (Cathcart), Derek Coope (Oban) 4.

BASINGSTOKE – Mark Hebden was defeated by 12-year-old Singaporean FM Jagadeesh Siddharth in the second round of the latest 4NCL Congress in Basingstoke (24-27 May). However, while Siddharth then lost to Adam Bukojemski, Hebden would defeat Bukojemski and win his final five games to pick up the £500 first prize.
Open: 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 6/7, 2 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 5½, 3-7 Marcus Harvey (Southampton), David Eggleston (Durham), James Jackson (Banbury), Adam Bukojemski (Battersea), Shabir Okhai (Syston) 5.
Under-2050: 1-2 Chris Fegan (Ilford), Bela Botlik (Hungary) 6, 3 David Ireland (Coventry) 5½.
Under-1825: 1 Russell Goodfellow (Tunbridge Wells) 6½, 2-3 Kevin Winter (Bradford), Peter Horlock (Godalming) 5½.
Under-120: 1-3 Tomy Joseph (Watford), Steven Ashworth (Ely), Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood) 5½.

BELFAST – The City of Belfast Championships (25-27 May) took place at the Pavilion, which is part of the Stormont Estate. Sergio Esteve Sanchez (Queen's University) won the Nemtzov Cup on tie-break from Gareth Annesley (South Belfast), after both had finished on 5/6. That same score saw Barney McGahan (Ballynafeigh) triumph in the Henderson Cup by half a point from Andrew Todd (Bangor).

BRISTOL – IM James Sherwin continued to enjoy his return to the board as he triumphed at the Graeme Thomson Memorial Rapidplay in Bristol on June 2nd. Sherwin began slowly, but after defeating Cardiff-based FM Grzegorz Toczek finished on 5/6, half a point ahead of Toczek and Essex's Leon Burnett.

CREWE – The Davies father and son duo were in top form at the Crewe Rapidplay on May 19th. Sam won the Major while Nigel defeated IM Nikolav Milchev en route to a clean sweep in the Open.
Open: 1 Nigel Davies (Southport) 7/7, 2 Nikolav Milchev (Bulgaria) 5½, 3 Jonathan Blackburn (Holmes Chapel) 4½.
Major: 1 Sam Davies (Southport) 5½, 2-3 Oleg Cukovs (Poulton-le-Fylde), Richard Szwajkun (Telford) 5.
Intermediate: 1 Anthony Tatar (Hoylake) 6, 2-3 Simon Layhe (Crewe), Robert Owens (Formby) 5½.
Minor: 1-3 Nigel Gardner (Crewe), Radu Tatar (Hoylake), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Telford) 5½.

Don Mason (left) defeated tournament leader Dominic Mackle in round four of the Cotswold Congress. The pair later shared first place with Alex Bullen, John Jenkins and Robin Moss.

FROME – Keith Arkell cleaned up at the popular Frome Congress (17-19 May).
Open: 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 5/5, 2-7 Jane Richmond (Swindon), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Rajat Makkar (Reading), George Miller (Keynsham), Michael Duggan, Oscar Garcia (both Poole) 3½.
Major: 1 Brendan O'Gorman (Coulsdon) 4, 2-9 Stephen Appleby (Wimborne), Tim Woodward (Trowbridge), John Weatherlake (Poole), Duncan Macarthur (Keynsham), Matthew Wilson (Torquay), Ian Bush (Cumnor), Yasser Tello (Wimbledon), Michael Redmond (Reading) 3½.
Intermediate: 1 Jack Tye (Downend) 4½, 2-3 Matthew Goatcher (Wells), Thomas Cooper (Devizes) 4.
Minor: 1 Elmira Walker (Downend) 5, 2-4 Theo Kirby (Glastonbury), Wayne Jukes (Shaftesbury) 4.

GLOUCESTER – The 51st Cotswold Congress (25-27 May) incorporated for the first time the Gloucestershire County Individual Championship, which was won by John Jenkins.
Open: 1-5 Alex Bullen (Cardiff), John Jenkins (Stroud), Dominic Mackle (Torquay), Don Mason (Shirley), Robin Moss (Carlisle) 4½/6.
Major: 1-3 Ian Clarke (Malvern), David Pinch (Milford Haven), Martin Jones (Wales) 4½.
Minor: 1-2 Paul Foster (Medway), Ben Larkin (Stratford-upon-Avon) 5, 3-4 John Constable (Bude), Kevin Langmaid (Yate) 4½.

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HUDDERSFIELD – YCA President Jim Burnett became Yorkshire Champion at the Huddersfield Congress (24-26 May).
Open: 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 5/6, 2-3 Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Jim Burnett (Doncaster) 4½.
Major: 1 Dariusz Rak (Poland) 5, 2-4 David Keddie (Huddersfield), Nigel Livesey (Marple), Alec Grice (Beverley) 4½.
Minor: 1-5 Malcolm Hara (Beverley), Roger Walker (Belper), Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Jim Wiseman (Liverpool), Colin Weller (Scarborough) 4½.

KETTERING – The Kettering Conference & Leisure Centre will host the ECF County Championship finals on July 13th. Surrey overcame Greater Manchester 11½-4½ and Yorkshire defeated Middlesex 10½-5½ to reach the Open final. The other finals will see: Minor Counties – Lincolnshire vs Devon; Under-180 – Essex vs Lancashire; Under-160 – Middlesex vs Suffolk; Under-140 – Yorkshire vs Worcestershire; Under-120 – Yorkshire vs Essex; Under-100 – Staffordshire vs Nottinghamshire.

LONDON – Next month, August 18-26, the Mind Sports Olympiad takes place at JW3 on Finchley Road. Tournament supremo Etan Ilfeld explains about what will be available:

"The annual Mind Sports Olympiad will feature over 70 tournaments and over a dozen world championships for many games, ranging from scrabble and chess to backgammon and Catan. In terms of chess, there is a great deal of variety and most events have cash prizes. The UK Chess 960 Rapid Championship will be a one-day tournament on August 25th followed by a new variant called Colour Chess that evening. August 20th will feature a standard rapid tournament followed by an evening of Chess Variants, which is a new addition.

The evening Chess Variants tournament will feature five double rounds of the following variants: Round 1: Losing Chess, 3min + 5s increment per move; Round 2: Monster Chess, 3min + 5s increment per move; Round 3: Knight-Relay Chess, 5min + 10s increment per move; Round 4: Atomic Chess, 5min + 5s increment per move; Round 5: Coin Chess, 5min + 5s increment per move.

For a complete set of rules please visit msoworld.com. Meanwhile, here are the rules for Atomic Chess which is a lot of fun:

The normal rules apply, but there is no check or checkmate;

When a piece is captured, an explosion occurs on the capture square. The explosion removes: the capturing piece; the captured piece; and all pieces, except pawns, on surrounding orthogonal squares (i.e. a king's move away);

A player wins by removing the opponent's king (by direct capture or explosion);

Moves which cause a player's own king to explode are not allowed.

Additional tournaments include a Chess Problem Solving (Puzzles) and an Exchange Chess tournament on August 26th. There will also be a Blitz event on August 18th.

Yes, there is such a thing as Diving Chess, which has its annual championship each year as part of the Mind Sports Olympiad. Do you fancy making your moves below the surface?

A quirky and truly unique chess variant called Diving Chess will have its annual world championship run on the afternoon of Saturday August 24th. Diving Chess is like regular chess except that the board is submerged in a pool and players can think for as long as they can hold their breath for each move. It was popularized by a BBC Breakfast video this year, as you can see via www.facebook.com/MindSportsOlympiad. There are no qualifiers and everyone is welcome.

For more information or to register, visit msoworld.com."

Jonathan Pein (Hendon) triumphed with 5/6 at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay on Tuesday 21st May, winning the Open with 5/6 to edge out Rory Kelly (Mushrooms) by half a point. The winner and runner-up in the Major, Andriy Peykov (Holborn) and Savas Stoica (Barnet), made the same scores, while Sam Peterson (Hampstead) managed 5½/6 to come first by a whole point and half in the Minor. The weekend before (18-19 May) P.U. Midhun (India) had won the Hampstead Under-2200 Congress with a perfect score. Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) and Harry Zheng (Essex) shared top honours in the Major with 4½/5, while the Under-135 saw a four-way tie between Steve Clare (Wallasey), Emily Maton (St Albans), Johan Mathew (Richmond) and Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood).

NEWMARKET – Graham Moore triumphed on tie-break at the EACU Closed Championships in Newmarket (31 May - 2 June).
Open: 1-3 Graham Moore (Bury St Edmunds), James Gardner (Bedford), John Anderson (Lowestoft) 4/5.
Major: 1-2 Dave Hall (Norwich), Robert Sanders (Sudbury) 4, 3-5 John Daugman (Cambridge), Julian Ray (Linton), Polina Shchepinova (Reigate) 3½.
Minor: 1 Gert De Block (Cambridge) 4½, 2-3 David McLean (Norwich), Edward Knox (Peterborough) 4.

RHYL – FM Martin Brown returned to the board and prevailed in a fairly strong Open at the Rhyl Congress (10-12 May).
Open: 1 Martin Brown (St Helens) 4, 2-3 Nigel Davies (Southport), Gary Quillan (Liverpool) 3½.
Major: 1-2 Michael Connor (Great Lever), Peter Garrett (Liverpool) 4, 3-5 Dave Patrick, Peter Hughes (both Halifax), John Taylor (Macclesfield) 3½.
Minor: 1 Dave Williams (Malpas) 4½, 2 Andrew Hughes (Rhyl) 4, 3-8 David Price (Crewe), Steve Richards (Wrexham), John Simmons, David Houston (both Rhyl), Nigel Morris (Coventry), Lewis Williams (Combined Services) 3½.

STEWARTON – The Stewarton Bonnet Guild Allegro took place on June 9th.
Open: 1 Stephen Mannion (Paisley) 4½/5, 2 Roddy McKay 4, 3-7 Alan Grant (both Cathcart), Mark Sanger (Prestwick), Philip Giulian (Giffnock), Alex Gilles (Stepps), Steven Brown (Ardrossan) 3½.
Major: 1 James Montgomery (Hawick) 4½, 2-3 John Larkin (Glasgow Polytechnic), Hamish Glen (Bellshill) 3½.
Minor: 1-2 Aryan Munshi (Kirkintillock), Dave Watson (Corstophine) 4, 3-6 Don Garford (Dunfermline), Bernard Cassidy (Hamilton), Alex MacDonald (Edinburgh), Stephen Heggie (Largs) 3½.

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Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pages 26-28)

1) Neatherway-Kocan
1 ♖g3+! 1-0 Mate follows: 1...fxg3 2 ♕g5+ ♔h8 3 ♖xf8#.

2) Crombleholme-Taylor
1 ♘f6! h6 2 ♗xh6! ♘xf6 (or 2...gxh6 3 ♕xh6#) **3 exf6 1-0**

3) Woltery-Burrows
1...♘f6! 0-1 The pin along the fifth wins the exchange.

4) Arakhamia-Grant-Kolbus
1 ♗f4! 1-0 The defender is overloaded with fatal consequences, since 1...♖c8 fails to 2 ♕xc7+! ♖xc7 3 ♖g8#.

5) Amin-Vachier-Lagrave
1...♕f2+! 0-1 2 ♖xf2 ♖8xf2+ 3 ♕xf2 (or 3 ♔h3 ♖h1#) 3...♖xf2+ 4 ♔h3 ♖xb2 wins a piece.

6) Anand-Navara
White had just blundered with 1 ♕e4-e7?: **1...♖d1+! ½-½** 2 ♘xd1 ♕d4+ results in perpetual check after 3 ♔c1 3...♕a1+ or 3 ♔e1 ♕g1+.

7) Rudd-Wadsworth
1...♖c1+! 0-1 1...♕xe3 2 fxe3 ♖c1+ 3 ♔h2 ♗e5+ 4 ♖f4 ♘xf4 5 exf4 ♗xf4+ 6 g3 ♗e5 would be much less effective than 1...♖c1+! 2 ♗xc1 ♕xf2+ 3 ♔h2 ♕h4#, but also wins. However, Black had to avoid White's last trick: 1...♗xe3? 2 ♕f6+ ♔g8 3 ♕d8+ ♔g7 4 ♕f6+.

8) Royal-Willow
1...♘xe4! 2 h3 (2 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 3 ♕xe4 ♖xe4 4 ♖xe4 ♗xf3 is also pretty horrendous for White) **2...♘xc3 3 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 4 bxc3 ♖xe1+ 5 ♖xe1 ♗xf3 6 cxb4 cxb4 7 ♖b1 ♖c8** left Black with a decisive advantage.

9) Gibbs-Deswarte
1 h6+! ♔f7 (1...♔xh6 2 ♕xf6 followed by ♘g5 is also crushing) **2 ♘g5+! 1-0** Mate follows.

10) Loeffler-Bounlom
1 ♖xh7! ♔xh7 2 ♕h2+ ♔g8 3 ♖h1 1-0 3...♔f7 fails to escape mate in view of 4 ♕h7+ ♔e8 5 ♕xg6+ ♖f7 6 ♖h8#.

11) Raja-Mikhalevski
1...♗c8! 2 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 3 ♖b1 (the b-pawn can't be halted after 3 ♖xa7 b2) **3...♗xf5 4 exf5 ♖b7 0-1**

12) Kobryn-Rothwell
A tragicomedy: **1...cxb4 2 ♖a1 ♔b8!** would have won, whereas 1...♔b6?? 2 ♖a1 ♔a7 3 b5 enabled White to turn the tables: 3...c4 4 b6+! ♔a8 5 b7+ ♔a7 6 ♖b1 and 1-0.

13) Wells-Hawkins
1...♖xe5! (fairly obvious, but the key is to have seen Black's next in advance) **2 ♗xd5+?** (2 ♗e3 was necessary, but Black would remain clearly for choice after, say, 2...♘e7 3 ♘f3 ♕d6 4 ♘xe5 ♕xe5) **2...♕xd5! 0-1** Overloading the white pieces, and not 2...♖xd5? 3 ♕e6+.

14) Miletic-Pobor
1 ♔c4! (the only square; 1 ♔e4? ♔e6 is an easy win, as is 1 ♔c5? ♔e6 2 ♔c4 ♔d6 3 ♔d3 ♔d5 4 ♔e3 e4) **1...♔e6 2 ♔c5** (Black is unable to activate his king and the draw clear) **2...♔e7 3 ♔d5 ♔f6 4 ♔c4 ♔g6 5 ♔d5 h5 6 ♔xe5 hxg4** (or 6...h4 7 gxh4 gxh4 8 ♔f4) **7 ♔e6 ♔h6 8 ♔f6 ♔h5 9 ♔g7 ½-½**

15) Brown-Kett
1...♖xb2! 2 ♖ab1? (this doesn't help, but even after 2 ♕xb2 ♕xg4+ 3 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 4 ♔e2 ♕xh6 Black's initiative would have been too strong) **2...♕c6+!** (and not 2...♖xe2?? 3 ♖b8+) **3 ♔h3 ♖f3+ 4 ♔h4 g5+! 5 ♔xg5** (of course, 5 ♗xg5 ♖xe2 is now possible) **5...♗f6+ 6 ♔h5 ♖h3# 0-1**

16) Duncan-Camacho Collados
1...♖gxg3! (1...♖exg3 2 hxg3 ♖f8! also wins, as does 1...♖f8 followed by ...♖xg3) **2 hxg3 h2 3 ♔g2 ♖e1 0-1**

17) Britton-Verma
1...♗xh3! 2 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 3 ♔g2 ♘xg5 4 ♗xc8 ♕xc8 (the key position to assess in advance: Black has a pawn and too strong an initiative for the exchange) **5 f3?** (5 ♖h1 was necessary, although after 5...♘fxe4 6 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 7 ♖c1 ♕c5 Black would have remained clearly for choice) **5...♕h3+ 6 ♔f2 ♕h2+ 7 ♔e3 ♖c8 8 ♖h1 ♖xc3+! 9 ♘xc3 ♕xg3 0-1** The threat of 10...♘g4+ is a killer.

18) Gormally-Adams
The game culminated in a draw: **1...♕f2 2 ♕d5+ ♔f8 3 ♖e7! ♕h4+ 4 ♔g1 ♕f2+ ½-½**. However, 1...♕c5! would have reached move 40 and won: 2 ♖e8+ (or 2 ♕e6+ ♔h7) 2...♖xe8 3 ♖xe8+ ♔f7 4 ♕d7+ ♔g6 5 ♕d3+ ♕f5 (5...f5 is also more than sufficient) 6 ♕g3+ ♕g4 7 ♕d3+ ♔f7 8 ♕xc2 ♔xe8 and there's no perpetual check, leaving White four pawns in arrears.

19) Vachier-Lagrave-Keymer
White went on to win after 1...♖c8? 2 gxf5 ♖g8+ 3 ♔h2, but **1...fxg4 2 ♕xh6 g3!** would have given Black sufficient counterplay to draw, in view of **3 fxg3** (3 ♕h7+ ♔e8 4 ♘g6? gxf2+ 5 ♔xf2 ♖c2+! leads to mate as the white king lacks a single safe square) **3...♕xd4+ 4 ♔h1 ♕f2** when White should really go in for **5 ♕h7+** (5 ♖d1? ♕xg3 wins) **5...♔e8 6 ♕h8+ ♔d7 7 ♖d1+ ♘d5 8 ♕g7+ ♔d6 9 ♕f8+**, etc.

20) Vachier Lagrave-Nepomniachtchi
1 ♗e5! ♖xf3 2 ♖c8+ ♔h7 3 ♗g8+ (removing the final white piece from being en prise) **3...♔h8 4 ♗xd4 ♖xh3** (4...♖f4 5 ♗e5 also fatally drives the black rook on to a light square) **5 ♗e6+ ♔h7 6 ♖c7 1-0**

21) Taylor-Hebden
1...e4! (White went on to win and earn an IM norm after 1...♔e6? 2 ♘g5+ ♔f5 3 ♘e4! d5 4 ♘c3 e4 5 ♘xd5 ♔e5 6 ♘c3 1-0) **2 fxe4+ ♔xe4 3 ♘xd6+** (3 ♔xh4 ♔e3 4 ♘g5 d5 also gives Black enough counterplay, as shown by 5 ♔xh5 d4 6 ♔g4 d3 7 ♘f3 ♔f2! 8 ♔h3 ♔e2) **3...♔e3 4 ♘f5+ ♔f2 5 ♘xh4** halts the black f-pawn (5 ♘d4 ♔e3 6 ♘f3 ♔f2 7 ♘xh4 transposes), but after **5...♔e3** White is unable to win: for example, **6 ♔h2** (or 6 ♘g6 f3 7 g3 f2 8 ♔g2 f1♕+! 9 ♔xf1 ♔f3) **6...♔f2 7 ♘f3 ♔f1 8 ♔h3 ♔f2 9 ♘e5 ♔e2 10 ♔h2 ♔f2 11 ♔h1** forces Black to give way with his king, but **11...♔g3 12 ♘f3 h4** is an easy draw in view of **13 ♘g1 f3 14 gxf3 h3**.

22) Topalov-Ding Liren
The knight must journey away from the king, which is counterintuitive. 1 ♘g7? ♔f6 was already losing for White in the game: 2 ♘h5+ (2 ♘e8+ ♔e7 3 ♘g7 ♖d3 4 ♔h7 ♔f6 5 ♘h5+ ♔g5 6 ♘g7 ♖h3+ is another important line, and transposes) 2...♔e6? (2...♔f5 or 2...♔g5 was correct) 3 ♔h7? (returning the favour; 3 ♔g7! would have saved the day, and if 3...♔f5 4 ♘f6) 3...♔f5 4 ♘g7+ ♔f6 5 ♘h5+ ♔g5 6 ♘g7 ♖h3+ 7 ♔g8 ♔f6 8 ♘e8+ ♔e6 9 ♘g7+ ♔e7 (the key square for the black king; White cannot move his king and finds his knight fatally destabilised) 10 ♘f5+ ♔f6 11 ♘d6 ♖h5 (11...♖d3! is much simpler: for example, 12 ♘e8+ ♔e7 13 ♘g7 ♖d5 14 ♔h7 ♔f8 15 ♘e6+ ♔f7 16 ♘f4 ♖f5) 12 ♘f7? (12 ♘e4+ ♔e6 13 ♔g7 ♖e5 would still have left Black with plenty of work to do) 12...♖d5 13 ♘h6 ♖d8+ 14 ♔h7 ♖d7+ 15 ♔g8 and the knight must drop off after 15...♔g6.

As such, correct is **1 ♘c7! ♖c3** (1...♖d3 2 ♔f8 also draws, as does 1...♔f6 when White must find 2 ♔f8!, and if 2...♖h3 3 ♘e8+ ♔e6 4 ♘g7+ ♔d6 5 ♘f5+ or 2...♖c3 3 ♘e8+ ♔e6 4 ♘g7+) **2 ♘e8 ♖c8 3 ♔f8** and Black is unable to make progress, although in practice would continue the torture for a fair while.

23) Jobava-Smirin
1...a6! (an extremely powerful prophylactic

move; instead, 1...♕a1+? 2 ♔e2 ♕xh1 3 c6 ♕xg2 4 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 5 cxd7+ ♔xd7 6 ♘xe5+ would have left White with at least enough play to draw) **2 cxd6 0-1** Jobava actually resigned after playing this, no doubt unhappy with how his creative early play had backfired. After 2...♘c5! 3 d7+ ♔e7 4 ♕f5 ♘xb7 5 ♘xe5 ♕e6 Black has everything covered.

24) Ding Liren-P.Harikrishna

White decisively broke through in the game after 1...♖d6? 2 d5 ♖g6 3 ♖h7 ♖d6 4 a5!, but as pointed out by David Cummings in his fine notes for ChessPublishing.com, **1...♘xe3+!** would have drawn: **2 ♘xe3** (2 fxe3? f2 3 ♘xf2 ♔xf2 only leaves Black with winning chances thanks to his powerful e-pawn and king) **2...♔xf2 3 ♘g4+** (3 ♘d1+? ♔e2 4 ♖h1 ♖c7+ 5 ♔d5 e3 is winning) **3...♔xg3 4 ♖xg5 f2 5 ♘xf2+ ♔xf2 6 d5 e3 7 ♔d3 e2 8 ♖f5+ ♔e1 9 ♖e5 ♔d1** and the draw becomes inevitable.

Never Mind the Grandmasters

(from page 47)

Many people think this is the obvious route: 1 ♘e5 dxe5 2 d5 e4 3 d6 e3 4 d7 exd2 (4...e2 5 d8♕ e1♕+ 6 ♔f7+ forces mate) 5 d8♕? d1♕. However, the correct way is to promote to a knight, not a queen, and then give mate on f7, the lesson being that we do not always have to promote to a queen.

This Month's New Releases

Opening Repertoire: 1 d4 with 2 c4
Cyrus Lakdawala, 448 pages
Everyman Chess
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Lakdawala's books polarise opinion. Some readers do not enjoy the flowery prose, but others think the chatty style helps to break down barriers and make the books fun to read.

There can be no doubting Lakdawala's hard work and commitment. This is his 40th chess book, which is a remarkable achievement. How can he write so many? The page-counts show they are not merely weekend potboilers. The only way to produce so much material is to put in a serious amount of hours; day in, day out.

This new book was borne out of the author's mid-life crisis, linking neatly with this being book number 40. "My buddy IM Tony Saidy sent an admonishing email about my opening choices. He politely opined that I was a disgrace to the white pieces with my choices of the London and Colle Systems and Ulf Anderssen's ultra-safe 1 ♘f3 instant end-game repertoire." This led to the insistence that "This trend must end and that I take up an aggressive 1 d4 and 2 c4! repertoire."

It is not easy to switch back from London systems and the like to a repertoire based on main lines, as the author is quick to admit. "With old age comes a loss of our former confidence and an increase in caution, and my philosophy has been that the more distrusting of sharp lines I am, the longer I will survive." One point is that it is almost impossible to match younger players in terms of keeping up to date with the latest theory. More mature chess players have a lot more 'real life' matters filling up their time.

Therefore it is essential to work with a repertoire that will stand the test of time while also offering a challenge to any defence Black cares to play. Lakdawala's chosen lines against the big hitters are: 4 f3 against the Nimzo-Indian; the Petrosian System against the King's Indian; the 'Pseudo-London' against the Grünfeld, i.e. 5 ♗f4; the 'Flick-Knife Variation' against the Modern Benoni; 5 f3 against the Benko Gambit; and the Exchange Variation against the Queen's Gambit Declined. Less commonly encountered defences such as the Budapest Gambit and Albin Counter-Gambit are covered also.

The illustrative games go up to 2017 and include heavyweight battles between Carlsen and Kramnik. The earliest game is from 1957 and shows Petrosian grinding out a win against Nikolaevsky in a typical King's Indian game. The age of the game doesn't matter; the quality of Petrosian's play does. Lakdawala is clearly a fan:

"You can't see me right now, but I'm on my knees, with hands together in prayer position, pleading with every reader to fire up their database and gather every book they own on Petrosian, call up all of the great Tigran Petrosian's King's Indian battles and study them carefully. I promise you that your time will be profitably spent and your understanding of the structure's subtlety is guaranteed to grow with time."

It is ironic that one of the most instructive games against the King's Indian comes from Petrosian's bitterest rival. It does, however, add further proof that the real giants of chess understood such positions so well.

V.Korchnoi-J.Plachetka
Ostrava 1994

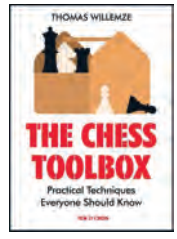
I wonder how many people would even have Korchnoi's next as a candidate move: **26 ♗xd4!! ♗xd4+** The next few moves are highly instructive too. **27 ♔h1 ♔g7 28 ♘f3 ♗f6 29 ♕g3! ♔h8 30 ♘g5!!**

And Black resigned on move 38.

Any book encouraging players to head back to the main lines of 1 d4 and 2 c4 should be welcomed by players on both sides of the board. White players will add a lot more depth to their game than can be achieved by playing the London System in every game and those playing as Black will finally get to use their favourite defences again.

The book also represents Lakdawala's personal journey in switching back to the main lines. He admits there is more to learn to get the repertoire up and running as compared to his previous books. "If you are a theory hater, this repertoire may not be right for you. The lines tend to be high-maintenance dances, whose steps you need to commit to memory." A fair point, but anyone trying the recommended repertoire will be making a clear statement of intent over the board and making it clear victory is in mind. The fully accessible material presented here will help readers take that big step.

Sean Marsh



The Chess Toolbox
Thomas Willemze, 400 pages, New in Chess
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Subtitled 'Practical techniques everyone should know', this book – designed with

ambitious club players in mind – aims to equip the club player with a thoroughly reliable and enduring set of tools for them to be able to construct more chess victories. The blurb states that: "If a chess hardware store would exist, most amateur chess players would be clueless what to ask for" before adding, "International Master and experienced chess trainer Thomas Willemze is the handyman you are looking for."

The author is a former National Youth Coach for the Dutch Chess Federation and understands that learning about chess should be fun. "Therefore, I have added quizzes, puzzles and as many entertaining subjects as possible. Think, for instance, of beautiful combinations like the Windmill and Lasker's double bishop sacrifice." Those classics do indeed make appearances in this book, cued in by the theme of piece coordination, which is central to the entire book.

John Watson, the well-respected writer and expert reviewer, has contributed a foreword and he describes this book as "A unique and thoughtful contribution to the literature of chess improvement, as well as contributing new insights into several areas of the game". Watson even goes as far as to say: "I can't think of another book that would be more helpful to the average player who is intent upon improving his chess."

It is certainly a very good book, with an abundance of fine material and excellent advice. The material challenges the reader from the start, spelling out various methods of improvement, starting with the art of exchanging pieces. "The more you improve, the more you realise that decisions that involve an exchange of material are the hardest ones to take in chess." This is interesting and the examples given by the author are very good. Careful study of this part of the book will lead to a change in the way any player handles exchanges and will help to reduce the element of laziness that is within nearly all of us; choosing the simplest solution to a problem is not always the best way to proceed. There are illustrative games, lots of explanatory prose, exercises, and even pages to act as flashcards, to drive home various instructive points.

The book is structured in five main parts, namely: Exchange your way to victory; Unleash your rooks; Attack and defence; Getting ready to use your new tools; and then over 100 pages covering the solutions to the exercises. Some of the material is set out in ways I have not seen before in other instructional books: for example, there is a full page of exercises asking the reader to assess whether a Greek Gift sacrifice is the best way to proceed and another on whether or not a ♖xe6 sacrifice is good. Another excellent section covers positions featuring the IQP and looks at the best ways to fight with it and against it.

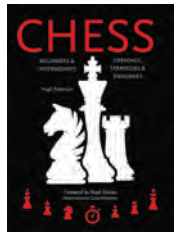
Here is a sample exercise from the aforementioned section on the Greek Gift.

F.Pasztor-L.Nadasi
Hungarian League 2010

Should Black take the plunge and sacrifice the bishop on h2, or not? One has to assess the two possible approaches of the white king, who could try to defend passively or actively after the initial sacrifice. Plenty to ponder – and I am not going to give the answer here.

The Chess Toolbox is a treasure trove of instructional material. Inexperienced club players will certainly be able to build up their toolbox of chess ideas by carefully studying the prose explanation and more advanced players will find plenty of the exercises challenging.

Sean Marsh

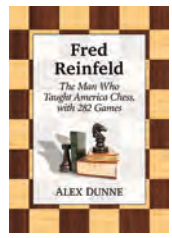


Chess: Beginners & Intermediate
Hugh Patterson, 176 pages, paperback
RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

With a foreword from Nigel Davies, this spiral-bound and heavily illustrated new work aims to take the reader from mastering the rules of the game to understanding the basics, not least the rudiments behind opening, attacking and middlegame play.

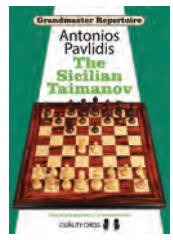
Endgames of the World Champions Volume 2 – from Steinitz to Spassky
Karsten Müller, PC-DVD; running time: 13 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

ChessBase's endgame guru presents another DVD on his favourite phase of the game and a DVD which has a most impressive running length. Müller's inspiration is once again the world champions and so viewers see highly instructive examples of the endgame prowess of everyone from Steinitz to Kasparov, with the final hour or so a welcome if perhaps unexpected bonus on the endgame strength of Paul Morphy.



Fred Reinfeld: The Man Who Taught America Chess, with 282 Games
Alex Dunne, 202 pages, paperback
SPECIAL PRICE £37.95

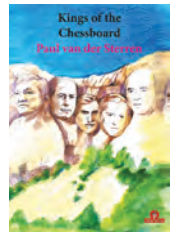
We have become accustomed to finely produced hardbacks from McFarland, but while this work is a softback, that does not mean any skimping has occurred with regards to the production qualities. Reinfeld's name will long be known for his writing, but did you realise that he was also a pretty strong player, with a plus score against Reshevsky no less? Dunne tells Reinfeld's story, while presenting and putting into context some of his best commentary and annotations.



Grandmaster Repertoire: The Sicilian Taimanov
Antonios Pavlidis, 480 pages, paperback
RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

The young Greek Grandmaster has made extensive use of the Taimanov Sicilian, 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6, throughout his career. His expertise shines through in this latest work for Quality Chess, which maps out a typically detailed repertoire for Black with the opening and one featuring much cutting-edge analysis.

As usual for a new work from Quality Chess, if you would prefer your copy of *Grandmaster Repertoire: The Sicilian Taimanov* in hardback format, do just add £4 to your order.



Kings of the Chessboard
Paul van der Sterren, 264 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

We have always been enthralled by the true greats of chess: Alekhine, Tal, Kasparov and

Carlsen being but four. In this fascinating new work for Thinkers Publishing, the retired but once pretty strong Dutch Grandmaster takes a look at the play of all the world champions and some of their 19th century forerunners. Each player receives a brief biography before van der Sterren sets out to explain what made them truly great. Those with gaps in their knowledge of chess history will certainly enjoy the read and even the experienced reader may well wish to dip into the book to peruse some fine stories and insight.

Komodo Chess 13
ChessBase PC-DVD;
64 Bit Multiprocessor Version
RRP £79.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £71.99**

Inspired by the success of *AlphaZero* and *Leela*, programmers Larry Kaufman and Mark Lefler have continued to develop their award-winning program. Once again both the standard version of *Komodo* and a 'Monte Carlo Tree Search' one are included, the latter now being some 350 points stronger than its *Komodo 12* predecessor.

Learning Chess Workbook: Step 1
Cor Van Wijgerden, 64 pages, paperback
RRP £5.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £5.39**

This is the first workbook in a six-part series designed by Rob Brunia and Cor van Wijgerden to teach children how to play chess. Their step-by-step approach has been successful across Europe and features a great number of puzzles, with teachers being able to download the answers. Also new in stock at Chess & Bridge is the second volume in the series, *Learning Chess Workbook: Step 2* (64 pages, RRP £5.99, Subscribers – £5.39), but with initial take-up high, do please contact the shop in advance if you're interested in ordering a copy of either volume.

Learning from the Mistakes of Others
Franco Zaninotto, 160 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The Italian FM's focus for German publisher Joachim Beyer Verlag is the games of players below 2000 level. As such, a great many mistakes commonly made at club level are examined, in clear fashion and with helpful conclusions drawn which the reader should then be able to apply in their own games.

Also just in from Joachim Beyer Verlag is *The Reti Opening: Properly Played* by Jerzy Konikowski & Uwe Bekemann (292 pages, RRP £19.99, Subscribers – £17.99), which sees the authors continue their fairly basic opening series by showing how White should handle 1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4.

Monster Your Middlegame Planning Volume 1
Efstratios Grivas, 264 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

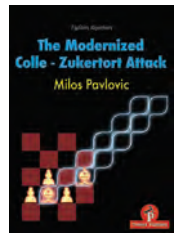
The prolific author and leading Greek trainer returns for Chess Evolution by examining one of the most important features in chess, planning. Grivas's target audience is those in the 1500-2200 range with the book chiefly consisting of 78 game fragments, in each of which the reader must work out the correct plan.

Strategy Training: How to Make a Plan
Robert Ris, PC-DVD; running time: 8 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The ChessBase DVD production crew have certainly been busy of late and this is another bumper offering, partly due to the 50 interactive exercises which fill up more than half of the DVD. Unsurprisingly structure and improving one's worst-placed piece are topics covered by the Dutch IM and acclaimed coach, but Ris also looks at how to create a target and how one should best judge when to maintain the tension, not rush into a hasty exchange.

The Colle-Koltanowski System
Simon Williams, PC-DVD; running time: 5 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The Colle-Koltanowski, or Colle-Zukertort as it is also known, has long been a fairly popular choice at club level. Going 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♗d3 c5 5 b3 may not seem all that ambitious, but White's set-up packs a certain attacking punch. Williams covers the key lines via a fine selection of classic Colle games, while not being afraid to show some of Black's better lines, both in the classical mainline of the Colle and when he avoids an early ...e6.



The Modernized Colle-Zukertort Attack
Milos Pavlovic, 202 pages, paperback
RRP £23.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £21.55**

Call it what you will, but the Colle where White develops his queenside with b3, ♗b2 and ♘bd2 looks set for a new wave of popularity, Pavlovic's work for Thinkers Publishing coming out at the same time as Williams's ChessBase DVD. Both are keen to show how easily White can obtain a strong attack against classical but sub-optimal black development. Williams is arguably stronger on the general ideas; Pavlovic preferring to delve quite deeply into the theory and, at times, possible transpositions to other openings.

The Sicilian Accelerated Dragon
Peter Heine Nielsen & Carsten Hansen, 368 pages, paperback
RRP £18.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.05**

Back in 1998 Magnus Carlsen's future trainer teamed up with fellow Dane Carsten Hansen to produce a definitive guide to their favourite Accelerated Dragon. The book is now back in print, having been self-published by Hansen, who has added some extra games and segments.

Carsten Hansen has certainly been busy of late, having also self-published *Daily Chess Training: Chess Tactics – Volume 1* (330 pages, RRP £18.99/Subs' £17.09), and *Specialized Chess Opening Tactics: Budapest & Fajarowicz Gambits* (220 pages, RRP £9.99/ Subs' £8.99). If interested in ordering one of these works, do please first contact Chess & Bridge by phone or email to check on stock levels.

The Torre Attack
Simon Williams, PC-DVD; running time: 7 hours
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While visiting the ChessBase studio in Hamburg, the GingerGM also found the time to record a DVD on a second club player favourite, and one in which he himself has been known to dabble. As ever, Williams explains the key ideas behind White's set-up in clear fashion, while also discussing such important issues as can White play the Torre when Black avoids 2...e6 and 2...g6 after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3. The coverage is also fairly cutting-edge in places and viewers may not be surprised to see the odd appearance by 'Harry the h-pawn'.

Saunders on Chess

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Did anyone spot my 'deliberate error' in the May column? I referred to Alekhine as "the third world champion", which he wasn't. I never was much good with numbers: Alekhine was the fourth world champion after Steinitz, Lasker and Capablanca. But I've noticed that other pundits have latched on to the 'Carlsen is the new Alekhine' trope which I explored in that article. In fact, Carlsen himself referenced his marked change of style when interviewed after winning the Altibox Norway tournament. There it was also suggested, as I did previously, that Carlsen was starting to play *à la AlphaZero*, with interviewer Anna Rudolf drawing the champ's attention to his growing penchant for pawn sacrifices and eliciting a smile from Carlsen which seemed to confirm the thesis.

The Altibox tournament was won by, surprise, surprise, Magnus Carlsen, but the biggest talking point was the use of Armageddon tie-breaks. This was similar to the idea I punted back in my January 2018 column, when I suggested three points for a win, zero for a loss, with draws being replayed via pairs of blitz games, with the blitz winner getting two points and the blitz loser one point. Rather than my 3-2-1-0 system, the Norwegians with their 2-1½-½-0 point system and single-game Armageddon tie-break have arguably devalued the classical element of the competition ever so slightly, as I wrote later in 2018 when the Altibox system was announced and as has been echoed by others (e.g. Vishy Anand) since then. However, it's still a very interesting development and has considerable value as a basis for further experimentation.

It's worth having a closer look at how the Armageddon results panned out in Norway. The first thing to note is that just 11 of the 45 scheduled games were decided in the primary classical game. Draws occurring in about 75% of the games is about par for the course in super-tournaments and one of the reasons why a secondary Armageddon tie-split is regarded as desirable for spectator appeal (which, in Norway at least, includes a sizeable prime-time TV audience).

A note on terminology: in the following table I've decided to refer to positive Armageddon results as 'successes' (win with either colour or a draw with Black), so as not to confuse them with the actual results of the games. Here's how the 34 Armageddon encounters in Norway break down, with the success-failure ratio shown against each player and by colour, in descending order of overall success:

Armageddon Results	Successes with White	Successes with Black	Overall
Carlsen	3-0	3-1	6-1
Yu Yangyi	2-1	2-0	4-1
Aronian	2-2	3-0	5-2
Caruana	2-1	1-2	3-3
Anand	1-2	3-2	4-4
So	1-2	3-2	4-4
MVL	2-3	2-1	4-4
Grischuk	0-3	2-2	2-5
Mamedyarov	1-3	0-1	1-4
Ding Liren	1-2	0-4	1-6

Whatever the points system, in 2019 Magnus Carlsen finishes top of the heap.

In summary we find that Black scored 19 successes to White's 15 which I suppose suggests that the Armageddon parameters used (10 minutes for White, 7 for Black with three-second increments from move 61) might need tweaking slightly to swing the pendulum back towards White. Of course, with such a limited data set it could be argued that such a tweak would be premature. I have no strong view.

Ignoring the Armageddon games and presenting the classical game results in a normal 1-½-0 format, the final scores would have been: 1-2 Carlsen, Ding Liren 5½, 3-4 So, Caruana 5, 5-6 Aronian, Yu Yangyi 4½, 7-8 Anand, MVL 4, 9-10 Grischuk, Mamedyarov 3½. One imagines the betting on a rapid play-off for first between Carlsen and Ding Liren would have attracted heavy money on Carlsen, so the old system with a tie-break play-off for first would thus have produced the same tournament winner as the new Altibox system. No surprise there either: whatever the format, fast chess, slow chess, or a mixture of the two, the Norwegian starts as favourite and, in 2019 at least, comes first. Only in the pre-tournament blitz event did he have to cede first place to Maxime Vachier-Lagrave who has currently snuck ahead of him in the world blitz rankings.

The other item on the table that hits you in the eye is Ding Liren's dismal 1-6 Armageddon score. The contrast between the player who is close to unbeatable at classical chess, but can hardly win a game at faster time controls could not be more stark. Grischuk and Mamedyarov also finished with negative Armageddon scores, but they did less well at standardplay chess too, so for them it may simply have been a matter of poor form.

The Altibox system begs the question whether the inclusion of quick chess results in a classical tournament devalues the product, but perhaps there is a more fundamental question: just how 'classical' is what we currently label classical chess anyway? Grandmaster Jon Tisdall touched on this in a post-Altibox tweet: "Actually, classical chess as I knew it, where the aim was to produce the highest quality games possible, doesn't really exist any more. Sooner or later it descends into rushed chaos. Nothing to be done, but I would love to see guys at this level play undistracted."

In our heart of hearts I suppose we would all love to see this, but the ship has sailed on game adjournment, which was the only way to deliver a uniform time control throughout the course of a game. It is often stated that adjournments were abolished 'because of computers', but in fact it was much more about the practicalities and expense of staging extra sessions, and, I suspect, the fact that leading players didn't relish their built-in adjournment advantage (travelling seconds and hotlines to remote helpers) being eroded in an age when their amateur opponents had access to computer assistance of the same power that they enjoyed themselves.

Like Tisdall, I lament the passing of the age of proper endgames, but one cannot argue with his succinct conclusion: nothing to be done. That said, I don't see too much need for gnashing of teeth whilst Carlsen plays at his current intensity, like a latter-day amalgam of Capablanca and Alekhine. His endgame play doesn't seem to suffer from being rushed. That said, his post-tournaments comments indicated he was far from happy at his own performance. Heaven help his rivals when he starts playing up to the level he expects of himself.

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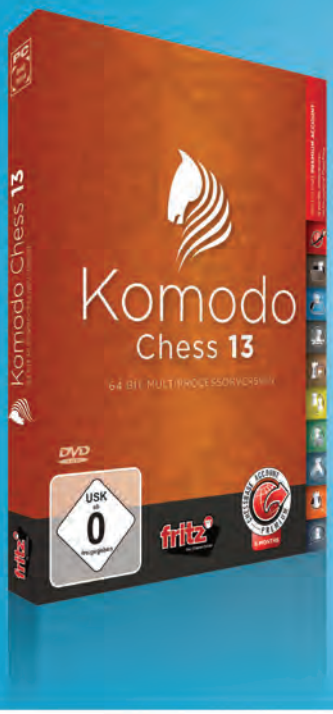

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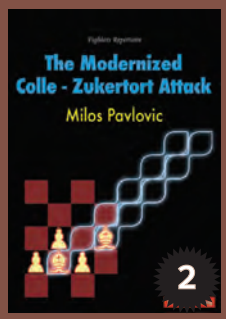

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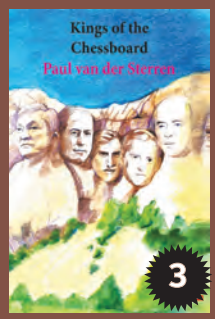

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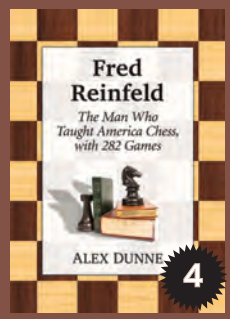

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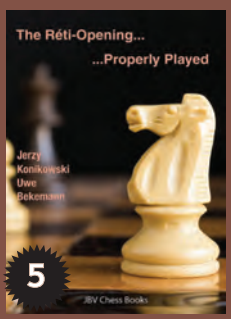

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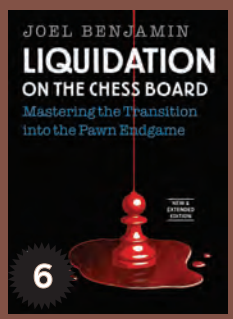

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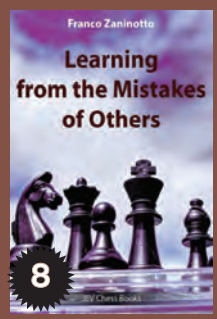

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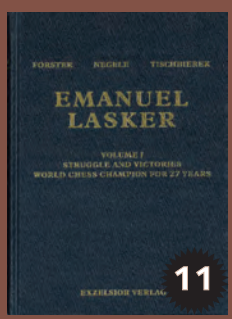

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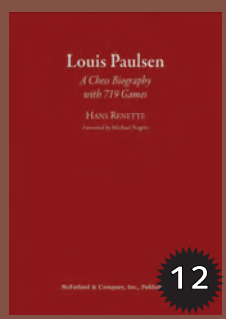

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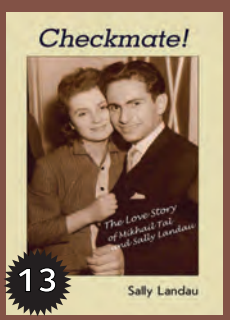

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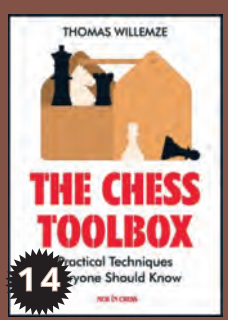

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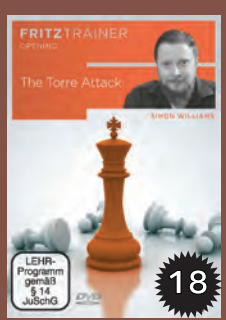

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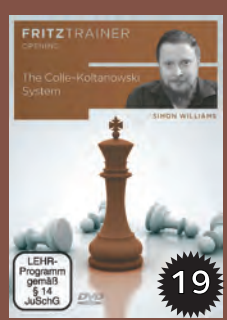

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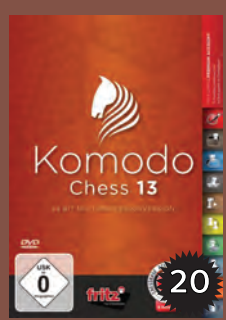

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